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HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

THIRD SERIES:

COMMENCING WITH THE ACCESSION OF

WILLIAM IV.

49° VICTORIÆ, 1886.

VOL. CCCV.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM

THE NINETEENTH DAY OF APRIL 1886,

TO

THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF MAY 1886.

FOURTH VOLUME OF THE SESSION.

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Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After debate, *Moved,* "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Beresford Hope:*)—After further short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 99, Noes 198; Majority 99.—(Div. List, No. 89.)

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Postal Service (British Possessions)—Rates of Postage—Resolution

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "the interests of the people urgently require that on letters, newspapers, and printed matter there should be a discontinuance of the charges of higher rates of postage in Great Britain than those which are charged to the public in other countries for Postal Service by British steamers carrying Mails to and from the Colonies and the possessions of Great Britain in India and elsewhere,"—(*Mr. James Hutton,*)—instead thereof 530

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"That the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos do take the Chair in all Committees of the Whole House unless where it shall have been otherwise directed by the House:

"That the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos do also take the Chair in all Committees upon Private Bills and other matters, unless where it shall have been otherwise directed by the House."

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ORDER OF THE DAY.

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POSTAL SERVICE (BRITISH POSSESSIONS)—RATES OF POSTAGE—RESOLUTION

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "the interests of the people urgently require that on letters, newspapers, and printed matter there should be a discontinuance of the charges of higher rates of postage in Great Britain than those which are charged to the public in other countries for Postal Service by British steamers carrying Mails to and from the Colonies and the possessions of Great Britain in India and elsewhere,"—(*Mr. James Hutton*,)—instead thereof 530

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*.

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[House counted out] [7.0.]

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Moved, "That the Earl of Morley be appointed to take the Chair in all Committees of this House for the remainder of this Session,"—(*The Earl Granville*) 551

Amendment *moved*, to leave out ("Earl of Morley,") and insert ("Duke of Buckingham and Chandos,")—(*The Marquess of Salisbury.*)

After short debate, on Question, That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Motion? their Lordships *divided;* Contents 103, Not-Contents 122; Majority 19.—*Resolved* in the *negative*.

Then it was *moved* to *resolve*,

"That the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos be appointed to take the Chair in all Committees of this House for the remainder of this Session:

"That the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos do take the Chair in all Committees of the Whole House unless where it shall have been otherwise directed by the House:

"That the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos do also take the Chair in all Committees upon Private Bills and other matters, unless where it shall have been otherwise directed by the House."

Agreed to; and *resolved* accordingly.

[*May* 10.] *Page*

REPRESENTATIVE PEERS FOR IRELAND—

Ordered, That there be laid before this House a nominal return, in tabular form, of the Lords Temporal at present elected to serve in Parliament for Ireland, arranged according to date of election, with the number of years of service, and showing the naval, military, or civil rank in public service (if any) of each Peer, and also the naval or military commands or civil public offices he may have held,—(*The Earl of Belmore.*)

NAVY—DISCIPLINE, &C.—IRREGULARITIES IN BARRACKS—Question, Observations, Viscount Midleton; Reply, The First Lord of the Admiralty (The Marquess of Ripon) 556

Metropolitan Police Stations Bill (No. 87)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a,"—(*The Paymaster General, Lord Thurlow*) 558

Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2^a accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House *To-morrow*.

NAVY—THE ESTIMATES, 1886-7—RESOLUTION—

Moved, "That the Navy Estimates for this year be laid on the Table of this House,"—(*The Viscount Sidmouth*) 558

After short debate, Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn*. [5.45.]

COMMONS, MONDAY, MAY 10.

QUESTIONS.

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EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) — MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ROSS KEEN, ROSS-SHIRE, AND ITS TEACHERS—Question, Dr. R. Macdonald; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) 561

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—LONGFORD ASSIZES—ASSAULT ON JAMES AND CHRISTOPHER NEWMAN—Questions, Mr. Justin M'Carthy; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 563

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EGYPT—SIR H. DRUMMOND WOLFF'S MISSION — Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) 564

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—POLICE SUPERANNUATION BILL—Question, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) 568

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Afghan Demarcation Commission—Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) .. 568

South-Eastern Europe—Greece—Blockade of the Greek Coast—Questions, Mr. Bourke, Mr. Joseph Cowen; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) 569

Parliament—Business of the House—Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) Bill—Question, Mr. Buchanan; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) 570

Spain—Signatures of the Commercial Convention—Statement, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce); Questions, Sir James Fergusson, Mr. Forwood, Sir Henry Roscoe; Answers, Mr. Bryce 570

Business of the House—Debate on the Government of Ireland Bill—Questions, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Lord Randolph Churchill; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) .. 572

Arms (Ireland) Bill—Question, Mr. Brodrick; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 573

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Government of Ireland Bill [Bill 181] [First Night]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*The First Lord of the Treasury, Mr. W. E. Gladstone*) 574

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*The Marquess of Hartington.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:"—After long debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Sir Henry James*:)—Motion *agreed to*:—Debate *adjourned* till *Thursday*.

Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2) Bill [Bill 200]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read the third time,"—(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. J. B. Balfour*) 678

After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided*; Ayes 219, Noes 52; Majority 167.—(Div. List, No. 90:)—Bill read the third time, and *passed*.

ustoms and Inland Revenue Bill [Bill 190]—

Bill *considered* in Committee 683

After short time spent therein, Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Thursday*.

Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) Bill [*Lords*] [Bill 194]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. J. B. Balfour*) 687

After short debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Dr. Cameron*:)—Motion *agreed to*:—Debate *adjourned* till *Monday* next.

Terms of Removal (Scotland) Bill [Bill 187]—

Order for Committee read:—*Moved*, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. J. B. Balfour*) 690

After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided*; Ayes 113, Noes 28; Majority 85.—(Div. List, No. 92.)

Bill *considered* in Committee.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Monday* 24th May.

SUPPLY [3rd May] REPORT—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [6th May], "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution:"—

(25.) "£58,921, to complete the sum for the Salaries and Expenses of the Courts of Law and Justice in Scotland, and other Legal Charges" 691

Question again proposed:—Debate *resumed.*

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to.*

Tramways Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Charles Acland, Mr. Mundella*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 208] 692

[2.15.]

LORDS, TUESDAY, MAY 11.

Salmon Fisheries Amendment (Scotland) Bill (No. 30)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^{a},"—(*The Marquess of Huntly*) .. 692

Amendment *moved,* to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months,")—(*The Lord Balfour.*)

After short debate, Amendment, Original Motion, and Bill (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham) Bill (No. 59)

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^{a},"—(*The Lord Bishop of Durham*) .. 703

Amendment *moved,* to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months,")—(*The Lord Bramwell.*)

After debate, on Question, That ("now") stand part of the Motion? their Lordships *divided;* Contents 47, Not-Contents 41; Majority 6:—*Resolved* in the *affirmative.*

Division List, Contents and Not-Contents 720

Bill read 2^{a} accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Thursday* next.

Elementary Education Provisional Order Confirmation (Birmingham) Bill [H.L.]—*Presented* (*The Lord President*); read 1^{a}; and *referred* to the Examiners (No. 96) 721

Elementary Education Provisional Order Confirmation (London) Bill [H.L.]—*Presented* (*The Lord President*); read 1^{a}, and *referred* to the Examiners (No. 97) 721

[7.45.]

COMMONS, TUESDAY, MAY 11.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

FELIXSTOWE, IPSWICH, AND MIDLANDS RAILWAY, PETITION FOR BILL—RESOLUTION—

Moved, "That the Resolution of the Standing Orders Committee of the 19th day of February last, with respect to the Felixstowe, Ipswich, and Midlands Railway Petition, together with the said Petition, and the Bill annexed thereto, be referred back to the said Committee, and that they have power to inquire whether there are any special circumstances which render it just and expedient that the Standing Orders should be dispensed with in respect to the said Petition,"—(*Mr. Everett*) .. 722

After short debate, Motion *agreed to.*

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PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Commons Regulation (Hayling) Provisional Order Bill—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department, Mr. Broadhurst*) 732

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Mr. Edward Buxton.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:" —*Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. T. M. Healy:*) —Question put, and *negatived.*

After debate, Original Question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question," put, and *negatived:*—Words *added.*

Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to:*—Second Reading *put off* for six months.

QUESTIONS.

State of Ireland—Question, Mr. Byrne; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 753

The Parks (Metropolis)—The Carriage Roads in St. James's Park—Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) 753

Post Office—Kiveton Park, York, W.R.—Question, Mr. Shirley; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) .. 754

Central Asia—Mission to Thibet—Question, Mr. Hutton; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Mr. Stafford Howard) .. 755

Army—Co-operative Stores—Questions, Mr. Hooper, Mr. Sclater-Booth; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) 755

Inland Revenue—Income Tax Collectors—Questions, Mr. Cox; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 758

Public Health—Removal of Small-Pox Prisoners—Questions, Mr. Stanley Leighton; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) 759

Navy—Contracts for Cruisers with Private Builders—Question, Mr. Jacks; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) .. 760

The Royal Irish Constabulary—Constable Hayes—Question, Mr. H. Campbell; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 760

Egypt—The Military Expedition—The Battle of Ginnis—Question, Viscount Newark; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) 761

Inland Navigation and Drainage (Ireland)—The River Shannon—Questions, Mr. W. Abraham (Limerick, W.), Mr. Cox; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 762

Government of Ireland Bill—The Civil Service—Question, Mr. Stanley Leighton; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 763

Ireland—Arklow Harbour Works—The Breakwater—Questions, Mr. W. J. Corbet; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 763

Egypt—British Troops in Egypt—Sanitary Condition—Question, Mr. Coope; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) 764

INLAND REVENUE—SALARIES OF FIRST-CLASS ASSISTANTS—Question, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt) 765

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL—Questions, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr. T. P. O'Connor; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) .. 765

MOTIONS.

—o—

DEATH PENALTY—RESOLUTION—

Moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived for the abolition of the death penalty for the crime of murder,"—(*Sir Joseph Pease*) 767

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "House" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "it is desirable that offences, for which the penalty of death now follows a verdict of guilty, unless remitted by Her Majesty, should be divided into three categories, as recommended by a Royal Commission in 1866; and in order that executions, when necessary, may be carried out with every regard to humanity and decency, an experienced person should be selected by the Government for the purpose, and adequately remunerated from public funds,"—(*Mr. Howard Vincent,*) —instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After debate, Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 63, Noes 117; Majority 54.

Division List, Ayes and Noes 789

VALUATION OF REAL PROPERTY—RESOLUTION—

Moved, "That a comprehensive measure for regulating the valuation of property for the purposes of Imperial and Local Taxation is essentially necessary,"—(*Mr. Duckham*) 790

After short debate, Resolution *agreed to.*

INCOME TAX—MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE—

Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the way in which Income Tax is levied, especially on unlet property, on partially let property, on property rated above its present letting value, on the investments of Insurance Companies, Savings and other Banks, and other cases in which Income Tax is claimed on more than the income actually received,"—(*Mr. Bartley*) 801

After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 63, Noes 174: Majority 111.—(Div. List, No. 94.)

Losses by Riot (Compensation) Bill—

Moved, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to give Compensation for Losses by Riot,"—(*Mr. Secretary Childers*) 805

After short debate, Motion *agreed to:*—Bill *ordered* (*Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Attorney General*); *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 209.]

ORDER OF THE DAY.

—o—

Land Transfer (Scotland) Bill [Bill 144]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Boyd-Kinnear*) 808

After debate, Question put, and *negatived.*

MOTIONS.

—o—

Charities, &c. (Exemption from Local Rates) Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir Julian Goldsmid, Mr. Baggallay, Mr. Octavius Morgan, Sir Robert Fowler, Baron F. de Rothschild, Sir Algernon Borthwick, Mr. H. W. Lawson*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 210] 828

Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers) Act (1875) Amendment Bill—
Ordered (*Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Chance*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 211] 828

Railway and Canal Traffic [Expenses, &c.]—
Considered in Committee 828
Resolution *agreed to;* to be reported *To-morrow.*
[12.45.]

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, MAY 12.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers' Expenses) (Ireland) Bill [Bill 8]—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Tuite*) .. 829
Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Colonel King-Harman.*)
Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:"—After debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 174, Noes 56; Majority 118.—(Div. List, No. 95.)

Compulsory Purchase of Land Compensation Bill [Bill 145]—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. M'Laren*) .. 855
Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Mr. Gregory.*)
Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:"—After debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 203, Noes 103; Majority 100.—(Div. List, No. 99.)
Main Question put, and *agreed to:*—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Tuesday* next.

Beer Adulteration (No. 3) Bill [Bill 66]—
Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [14th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time:"—Question again proposed:—Debate *resumed* 868
After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to:*—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Wednesday* 2nd June.

Church Patronage Bill [Bill 4]—
Order for Committee read:—*Moved,* "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(*Mr. Leatham*) 875
After short debate, it being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

—o—

Stipendiary Magistrates (Pensions) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Hastings, Mr. Kenrick, Mr. Forwood, Mr. Wiggin*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 212] 876

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After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2^a accordingly, and *referred* to a Select Committee.

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STATE OF IRELAND—REPRESENTATIONS FROM PUBLIC BODIES TO THE PRIME MINISTER—MOTION FOR A PAPER—

Copy of Selection from the representations made to the First Lord of the Treasury by public bodies, in response to the invitation for the free communication of views on Ireland, contained in a letter addressed by the First Lord of the Treasury to Viscount de Vesci on the 12th day of February, 1886, ordered by the House of Commons on the 16th April last to be printed, No. 117: Ordered to be laid before the House (*The Lord Ashbourne.*)

Friendly Societies Act (1875) **Amendment Bill** [H.L.]—*Presented* (*The Lord Greville*); read 1^a (No. 99) 898

[6.45.]

COMMONS, THURSDAY, MAY 13.

QUESTIONS.

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ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Government of Ireland Bill [Bill 181]—SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE] [SECOND NIGHT]—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [10th May], "That the Bill be now read a second time:"—Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:"—Debate *resumed* 912

After long debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Sir R. Assheton Cross*:)—Motion *agreed to*:—Debate *adjourned* till *Monday* next.

Customs and Inland Revenue Bill [Bill 190]—

Bill *considered* in Committee 1023

After short time spent therein, Bill *reported*, without Amendment; to be read the third time *To-morrow*.

MOTION.

Ulster Canal and Tyrone Navigation Bill [Bill 141]—

Moved, "That the Select Committee on the Ulster Canal and Tyrone Navigation Bill do consist of Nine Members, Five to be nominated by the House and Four by the Committee of Selection,"—(*Mr. Henry H. Fowler*) 1030

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "five,"—(*Mr. Biggar.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'five' stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Main Question put, and *agreed to*.

Ordered, That all Petitions against the Bill presented not later than three clear days before the sitting of the Committee be referred to the Committee, and that such of the Petitioners as pray to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, or Witnesses be heard upon their Petitions, if they think fit, and Counsel heard in favour of the Bill against such Petitions.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum of the Committee,—(*Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

[1.0.]

LORDS, FRIDAY, MAY 14.

Their Lordships met;—and having gone through the Business on the Paper without debate, [House adjourned] [4.30.]

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QUESTIONS.

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Supply—Order for Committee read—*continued.*

Import Duties—Resolution—Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, it is expedient to raise a larger portion of the Revenue of the Country from Import Duties, and that such Duties should be levied on certain descriptions of fully manufactured Foreign goods, entering into competition with similar goods of our own make; and that the Revenue so obtained should be applied to the reduction of the Duties on tea, coffee, and cocoa, and of other burdensome imposts,"—(*Mr. Jennings,*)—instead thereof 1045

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After long debate, Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question again proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—

Mining Royalties—Resolution—Obesrvations, Mr. Mason:—Debate thereon 1113

Motion, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," by leave, *withdrawn.*

Supply,—Committee upon *Monday* next.

Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers) Act (1875) Amendment Bill [Bill 211]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. T. M. Healy*) 1142

After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* 24th May.

Kitchen and Refreshment Rooms—

Moved, "That the Select Committee on the Kitchen and Refreshment Rooms do consist of Nineteen Members,"—(*The Secretary to the Treasury, Mr. Arnold Morley*) 1144

After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Other Members added. [2.0.]

LORDS, MONDAY, MAY 17.

Universities (Scotland)—Question, Observations, Lord Balfour; Reply, The Secretary for Scotland (The Earl of Dalhousie) 1145

Infants Bill (No. 86)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Lord Chancellor, Lord Herschell*) 1146

After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly.

Malta—Resolution—

Moved for, "Copies of all Correspondence having reference to the Maltese nobility which has been addressed to or has emanated from the Colonial Office since August 1883, up to the present date,"—(*The Viscount Sidmouth*) 1149

Motion *agreed to.*

Copies or extracts of correspondence with reference to the Maltese nobility (in continuation of [C.-3812], August 1883):

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

Incumbents of Benefices Loans Extension Bill (No. 89)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Chairman of Committees, The Duke of Buckingham*) 1150

After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House *To-morrow.*

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LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART—THE WORKS OF MR. WATTS, R.A.—Question, Observations, The Earl of Wemyss; Reply, The Lord President of the Council (Earl Spencer) 1151

Rivers Pollution Prevention Bill [H.L.]—*Presented* (*The Lord Balfour*); read 1ª (No. 114) 1153

West Indian Incumbered Estates Bill [H.L.] — *Presented* (*The Earl Granville*); read 1ª (No. 115) 1153

British North America Bill [H.L.]—*Presented* (*The Earl Granville*); read 1ª (No. 116) 1154

Church Patronage Bill [H.L.]—
Select Committee *nominated*:—List of the Committee 1154

[6.0.]

COMMONS, MONDAY, MAY 17.

QUESTIONS.

—o—

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION—THE SECOND REPORT—Question, Mr. Lewis Fry; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) 1154

SCOTLAND—SHERIFF IVORY—Question, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) 1155

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—THE EDUCATION CODE—EXAMINATIONS—Question, Mr. Mildmay; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) 1155

ARMY (INDIA) — ROYAL ENGINEER OFFICERS — Question, Mr. Howard Spensley; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) 1156

INDIA (FINANCE, &C.) — DEPRECIATION OF SILVER — Question, Colonel Hughes - Hallett; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt) 1156

PUBLIC HEALTH (METROPOLIS)—THE ISLE OF DOGS—Question, Mr. Henry Green; Answer, The Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg) 1157

BOARD OF WORKS (IRELAND)—PAYMENT OF FINAL INSTALMENT OF A LOAN GRANTED UNDER THE LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1881—Question, Mr. Tuite; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1157

STATE OF IRELAND—THE ARMING OF ULSTER—Question, Mr. William O'Brien; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1158

CURRENCY, &C.—GOLD COINAGE—Question, Mr. Kimber; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt) 1159

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—JOHN TAYLOR, RATE COLLECTOR FOR A DISTRICT OF THE LURGAN POOR LAW UNION—Question, Mr. O'Hanlon; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1159

VENEZUELA — THE TERRITORY OF THE YURUARY — Question, Mr. Watt; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) 1160

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—PUNISHMENT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN—Question, Mr. Herbert Gardner; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) 1160

NAVY—H.M.S. "COLLINGWOOD"—BURSTING OF THE 43-TON GUN—Question, Sir Henry Tyler; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) 1160

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA—THE JOINT COMMITTEE—Questions, Mr. James Maclean, Lord Randolph Churchill; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) 1161

SPAIN—THE COMMERCIAL CONVENTION—Question, Mr. Forwood; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) .. 1162

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EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—SCHOOL BOARDS AND VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS—Question, Mr. Conway; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) 1163

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—VENTILATION OF THE HOUSE—Question, Sir Henry Roscoe; Answer, The Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg) 1164

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Government of Ireland Bill [Bill 181] SECOND READING [ADJOURNED DEBATE] [THIRD NIGHT]—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [10th May:] —Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:"—Debate *resumed* 1165

After long debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Shaw Lefevre*:)—Motion *agreed to*:—Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow*.

Medical Acts Amendment Bill [Bill 163]—

Order for Committee read:—*Moved*, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(*The Vice President of the Council, Sir Lyon Playfair*) .. 1256

Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill *considered* in Committee.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Monday* next.

Trees (Ireland) Bill—

Lords Amendments *considered* 1256

One *agreed to*; some *agreed to* with Amendments; some *disagreed to*.

Committee *appointed*, "to draw up Reasons to be assigned to the Lords for disagreeing to the Amendments to which this House hath disagreed:"—List of the Committee.. 1260

Tramways Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Charles Acland, Mr. Mundella*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 213] 1260

[1.0.]

LORDS, TUESDAY, MAY 18.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE—

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that Her Majesty had (by Commission) appointed the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos Speaker of the House in the absence of the Lord Chancellor: The said Commission was read.

Trees (Ireland) Bill—

Returned from the Commons with one of the Amendments *agreed to*, some agreed to with amendments, and some disagreed to, together with Reasons for such disagreement: The Commons amendments and reasons to be *printed*. (No. 117.)

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER No. 128)—

The evidence taken before the Select Committee from time to time to be *printed*, for the use of the Members of this House; but no copies thereof to be delivered, except to Members of the Committee, until further order (No. 118.)

Hyde Park Corner (New Streets) Bill (No. 88)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The First Commissioner of Works, The Earl of Elgin*) 1261

After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed*: The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Labourers (Ireland) Acts Amendment Bill (No. 51)—

House in Committee (according to Order) 1263

Bill to be *printed*, as amended. (No. 120.)

Companies Acts Amendment Bill (No. 82)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Secretary for Scotland, The Earl of Dalhousie*) 1271

After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Thursday* next.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT, 1875—Questions, The Earl of Iddesleigh; Answers, The Lord Chancellor (Lord Herschell) 1272

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY (DURHAM) BILL (PETITIONS)—MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE—

Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the validity of all petitions presented to this House for or against the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham) Bill, and of the signatures attached thereto, with a view to ascertaining how far such signatures are or are not genuine,"—(*The Earl of Wemyss*) 1273

After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Committee appointed accordingly. [7.0.]

COMMONS, TUESDAY, MAY 18.

QUESTIONS.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS—UNION OFFICIALS—Question, Mr. Alexander Blane; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) .. 1277

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—KINGSTOWN HARBOUR—Question, Sir Thomas Esmonde; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1278

SALMON FISHERIES (IRELAND)—THE SUIR FISHERIES—Question, Mr. P. J. Power; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) .. 1278

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—MID-DAY MAIL SERVICE FOR THE TOWN OF BALLINAMORE, CO. LEITRIM—Question, Mr. Hayden; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1279

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—MOUNTNORRIS POST OFFICE—Question, Mr. Alexander Blane; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Arnold Morley) 1279

CHARITY COMMISSIONERS—INKBERROW CHARITIES — Question, Dr. Foster; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) .. 1280

HARBOURS — PUBLIC HARBOUR TRUSTS — Question, Sir John Jenkins; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) .. 1280

EXPENSES OF REGISTRATION OF ELECTIONS (IRELAND)—Question, Mr. Peter M'Donald; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1281

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1870—APPEALS IN CO. DONEGAL—Question, Mr. Bernard Kelly; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1281

THE CHANNEL ISLANDS—REVENUES OF GUERNSEY—Question, Mr. Boyd-Kinnear; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1282

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — DUNGANNON — Questions, Mr. William O'Brien; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1283

HOME RULE—THE METHODIST COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES, DUBLIN—Question, Mr. Jordan; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1284

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Public Health—Small-Pox at Wooburn, Bucks—Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Secretary to the Local Government Board (Mr. Borlase) 1285

Army—The Nile Expeditions—The Rations—Question, Colonel Brookfield; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Woodall) .. 1286

Army—Contracts for Forage—Question, Colonel Brookfield; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Woodall) 1286

Army—The Ordnance Survey — The Royal Engineers—Question, Admiral Sir John Commerell; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) 1286

South Africa—Zululand—The Papers—Question, Mr. Baden-Powell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Osborne Morgan) 1287

The Pacific Blockade of Greece—Question, Mr. Crompton; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) .. 1288

Government of Ireland Bill—The Schedules—Question, Mr. Raikes; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) .. 1288

Arms (Ireland) Bill—Notice, Mr. Lewis; Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, Colonel Waring 1289

MOTION.

Notices of Motions and Orders of the Day—The Debate on the Government of Ireland Bill and the Arms Bill—Resolution—

Moved, "That this day, and on succeeding Tuesdays and Fridays, the Order for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Second Reading of the Government of Ireland Bill, when it is set down among the Orders of the Day, have precedence of Notices of Motions and Orders of the Day,"—(*Mr. Gladstone*) 1289

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to.*

ORDER OF THE DAY.

Government of Ireland Bill [Bill 181] Second Reading [Adjourned Debate] [Fourth Night]—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [10th May:]—Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:"—Debate *resumed* 1299

After long debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Justin M'Carthy*:)—Motion *agreed to*:—Debate *further adjourned* till *Thursday.*

MOTIONS.

Lowe's Charity (Lichfield)—Resolution—

Moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, every Scheme of the Charity Commissioners ought to provide for the majority of the Trustees or Managers being directly elected by the ratepayers in the locality to which the Charity extends,"—(*Sir John Swinburne*) 1385

After short debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. James Stuart*:)—After further short debate, Question put:—The House *divided*; Ayes 59, Noes 73; Majority 14.—(Div. List, No. 97.)

Original Question again proposed 1403

After short debate, Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

Page

Coal Mines Regulation Bill—

Moved, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill for the Regulation of Coal Mines,"—(*The Secretary of State for the Home Department, Mr. Childers*) 1405

After short debate, Motion *agreed to:*—Bill *ordered* (*Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. Broadhurst*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 217.]

Ulster Canal and Tyrone Navigation Bill [Bill 141]—

Moved, "That Mr. Henry H. Fowler be a Member of the Committee,"—(*The Secretary to the Treasury, Mr. Arnold Morley*) 1406

After short debate, *Moved,* "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Arnold Morley:*)—Motion *agreed to:*—Debate *adjourned* till *Monday* next.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

Conveyancing (Scotland) Act (1874) Amendment Bill [Bill 127]

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Dr. Cameron*) .. 1407

After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 55, Noes 28; Majority 27.—(Div. List, No. 98.)

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

Public Health Acts (Improvement Expenses) (*re-committed*) **Bill** [Bill 153]—

Order for Committee read 1411

Moved, "That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power to amend section 156 of 'The Public Health Act, 1875,' by extending its provisions to the erection of buildings in streets,"—(*Captain Cotton.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Moved, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(*Mr. William Cook:*)—Motion *agreed to:*—Bill *considered* in Committee.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Tuesday* next.

Gas Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Charles Acland, Mr. Mundella*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 214] 1412

Freshwater Fisheries Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Charles Acland, Mr. Mundella*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 218] 1413

[2.30.]

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, MAY 19.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

—o—

Dundalk Gas Bill—

Bill, as amended, to be considered *To-morrow* 1413

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) Bill [Bill 5]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Edward Harrington*) 1413

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Colonel King-Harman.*)

[*May* 19.]

Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) Bill—continued.

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:"—After debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 203, Noes 105; Majority 98.—(Div. List, No. 99.)

Main Question put, and *agreed to:*—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

Railway Regulation Bill [Bill 97]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Channing*) .. 1440

After debate, Question put, and *agreed to:*—Bill read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee.

Parliamentary Voters (Registration) Bill [Bill 100]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir Julian Goldsmid*) 1465

And it being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Further Proceeding on Second Reading stood adjourned till *To-morrow.*

Married Women (Maintenance in Case of Desertion) Bill [Bill 111]—

Order for Committee read 1465

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power to extend the provisions of the Bill to the maintenance of children deserted by their father,—(*Mr. Warmington.*)

Further Proceeding on going into Committee *deferred* till *Wednesday* 2nd June.

MOTIONS.

Barristers at Law and Advocates (Fees) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Boord, Mr. Ingram, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Hanbury*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 219] 1465

Distress for Rent Amendment Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Burt, Mr. Arthur Williams, Mr. William Cook, Mr. Robson*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 220] .. 1466

Post Office Sites Bill—

Select Committee *nominated:*—List of the Committee 1466

[5.55.]

LORDS, THURSDAY, MAY 20.

Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2) Bill (No. 95)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^{a},"—(*The Secretary for Scotland, The Earl of Dalhousie*) 1466

After debate, Motion *agreed to:*—Bill read 2^{a} accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Thursday* next.

Oxford University (Justices) Bill [H.L.]—*Presented* (*The Lord Chancellor*); read 1^{a} (No. 119) 1494

[6.45.]

COMMONS, THURSDAY, MAY 20.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

Dundalk Gas Bill (by Order)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now taken into Consideration,"—(*Mr. Dillwyn*) 1495

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Mr. Nolan.*)

Dundalk Gas Bill (*by Order*)—continued.

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 169, Noes 210; Majority 41.—(Div. List, No. 100:)—Words *added.*

Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to:*—Consideration, as amended, *put off* for six months.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Police and Improvement (Scotland) Provisional Order (Leith) Bill [Bill 197]—

Order for Second Reading read 1516

After short debate, Bill read a second time, and *committed.*

QUESTIONS.

NAVY—COMMISSIONS FOR SEAMEN OF THE FLEET—Questions, Captain Verney, Captain Price; Answers, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) 1516

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—RENARD POINT PIER—Question, Mr. John O'Connor (Tipperary, S.); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1517

FIRES (METROPOLIS)—FATAL FIRE IN BEAK STREET—Question, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) 1517

SEA FISHERIES ACT (SCOTLAND)—FORESHORES—Question, Mr. Macfarlane; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) 1518

TRADE AND COMMERCE—IMITATION BRITISH TRADE MARKS—Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) 1519

THE WESTERN PACIFIC—REPRISALS OF NATIVES—Question, Dr. Cameron; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) .. 1519

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—CLAREMORRIS—INTIMIDATION—Question, Mr. Dillon; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) .. 1520

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACT, 1884—REQUISITION FORMS—THE RATE COLLECTORS OF MOUNTMELLICK UNION—Questions, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1520

SOUTH AMERICA—THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC—Question, Lord Frederick Hamilton; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) 1521

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS ACT—FISHERMEN ON THE NORTH-EAST COAST OF SCOTLAND—Question, Mr. Esslemont; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) 1522

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—HOLYHEAD PIER—Question, Lord Claud Hamilton; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1522

ARMS (IRELAND) BILL—Question, Mr. Mitchell Henry; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1523

INDIA—CALCUTTA CUSTOM HOUSE—ADULTERATION OF M'GAVIN AND CO.'S WHISKY—Question, Sir Robert Fowler; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Mr. Stafford Howard) 1524

NAVY—H.M.S. "COLOSSUS"—THE 43-TON GUNS—Questions, Lord Charles Beresford, Mr. Bethell, Lord Randolph Churchill; Answers, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert), The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Woodall) 1524

IRELAND — ALLEGED CATTLE STEALING — Question, Captain M'Calmont; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) .. 1526
INLAND FISHERIES (IRELAND) — POISONING FISH — Question, Captain M'Calmont; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1526
LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)—ALLEGED RIOT AT LISTOWEL—Question, Captain M'Calmont; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1527
RAILWAYS (METROPOLIS)—THE PADDINGTON AND LIMEHOUSE RAILWAY—Question, Mr. Cremer; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Mr. C. T. D. Acland) 1528
METROPOLITAN RATING — PARISH OF PUTNEY — Question, Mr. Kimber; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Stansfeld) 1528
PRISONS (IRELAND) — OMAGH GAOL — Question, Lord Ernest Hamilton; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) .. 1529
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—Questions, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) .. 1530

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

Arms (Ireland) Bill [Bill 205]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*The Chief Secretary for Ireland, Mr. John Morley*) 1530
After long debate, Question put: — The House *divided;* Ayes 303, Noes 89; Majority 214.
Division List, Ayes and Noes 1609
Bill *committed* for *Monday* next.

Losses by Riot (Compensation) Bill [Bill 209]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*The Secretary of State for the Home Department, Mr. Childers*) 1612
After short debate, Motion *agreed to:*—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

Freshwater Fisheries Bill [Bill 218]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*The Secretary to the Board of Trade, Mr. C. T. D. Acland*) 1614
After short debate, Motion *agreed to:*—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

Stannaries Act (1869) Amendment Bill [Bill 203]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir John St. Aubyn*) 1616
Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Conybeare:*)—After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*
Original Question put, and *agreed to:*—Bill read a second time.
After further short debate, Bill *committed* for *Thursday* 3rd June.

Mining Leases (Cornwall and Devon) Bill [Bill 204]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir John St. Aubyn*) 1625
Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Conybeare:*)—After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 72, Noes 69; Majority 3.—(Div. List, No. 102.)
Debate *adjourned* till *Thursday* 3rd June.

MOTIONS.

Parliamentary Elections (Ireland) (Clerical Interference)—
Moved, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to prevent Clerical interference before, at, and during a Parliamentary Election in Ireland,"—(*Captain M'Calmont*) .. 1628
After short debate, Question put, and *negatived*.

Police Forces (Removal of Disabilities) Bill—
Moved, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill for the removal of disabilities of the Police Forces to Vote at Parliamentary Elections in Great Britain,"—(*Mr. Tottenham*) 1631
After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill *ordered* (*Mr. Tottenham, Sir William Hart Dyke, Sir Julian Goldsmid, Viscount Grimston, Mr. Biddulph, Colonel King-Harman, Mr. Rylands*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 221.]

Public Parks and Works (Metropolis) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Leveson Gower*) 1635
[2.0.]

LORDS, FRIDAY, MAY 21.

Ionian Bank Bill—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Chairman of Committees, The Duke of Buckingham*) 1635
Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY—Question, Observations, Viscount Hardinge; Reply, The First Commissioner of Works (The Earl of Elgin) .. 1635
THE NEW WAR OFFICE AND ADMIRALTY—Question, Viscount Sidmouth; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (The Earl of Elgin) .. 1638

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham) Bill (No. 59)
House in Committee (according to Order) 1638
Amendments made; the Report thereof to be received on *Monday* next; and Bill to be *printed*, as amended. (No. 123.)

Customs and Inland Revenue Bill (No. 112)—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3ª,"—(*The Lord Sudeley*) .. 1648
After short debate, Motion *agreed to*:—Bill read 3ª accordingly, and *passed*.

British North America Bill (No. 116)—
House in Committee (according to Order) 1649
Bill *reported*, without Amendment; and to be read 3ª on *Monday* next.

Contagious Diseases (Animals) Bill [H.L.]—*Presented* (*The Lord President*); read 1ª (No. 122) 1649
[6.0.]

COMMONS, FRIDAY, MAY 21.

QUESTIONS.

NAVY—H.M.S. "COLLINGWOOD"—BURSTING OF THE 43-TON GUN—Questions, Captain Price, Mr. Carbutt; Answers, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Woodall) 1650
WAR DEPARTMENT—MANUFACTURE OF GUNS—Question, Sir John Kennaway; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) 1652
MINES REGULATION ACT — WEIGHTS AND MEASURES — Question, Mr. Forwood; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) 1652
ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—PROMOTION—Questions, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) .. 1653

British Commercial Interests Abroad—Diplomatic and Consular Representatives—Questions, Mr. Howard Vincent, Mr. Hutton; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) .. 1654

Education Department—Technical Instruction—Questions, Sir Bernhard Samuelson, Mr. P. M'Donald; Answers, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) 1655

Inland Navigation and Drainage (Ireland)—The River Bann—Questions, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H Fowler) 1656

Merchant Shipping—Wreck of the Barque "Cartwell"—Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Civil Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. R. W. Duff) 1657

Navy (Armament, &c.)—The 43-ton Gun—Question, Mr. Carbutt; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) 1658

Poor Law (Ireland)—Union Amalgamation—Questions, Mr. Marum, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1659

Education Department—Schools on the Continent—Mr. Matthew Arnold's Report—Questions, Sir Henry Holland; Answers, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) 1659

Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries—Transfer to the Board of Trade—Questions, Mr. Portman; Answers, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) 1660

Political Demonstrations—Military Bands—Questions, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Coote, Sir Herbert Maxwell; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) 1660

Navy—Contracts for Cruisers with Private Builders—Questions, Mr. Jacks; Answers, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) .. 1662

The Debate on the Government of Ireland Bill—Questions, Observations, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach; Questions, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Labouchere; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone); Observations, The Marquess of Hartington .. 1663

Sittings and Adjournment of the House—The Derby Day—Notice, Mr. Labouchere 1666

Government of India—The Joint Committee—Question, Mr. Magniac; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) .. 1666

The Estimates—Vote on Account—Question, Sir Walter B. Barttelot; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) .. 1667

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Government of Ireland Bill [Bill 181] Second Reading [Adjourned Debate] [Fifth Night]—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [10th May], "That the Bill be now read a second time:"—Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:"—Debate *resumed* 1667

After long debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Viscount Lymington*:)—Motion *agreed to*:—Debate *further adjourned* till *Monday* next.

Cottagers' Allotment Gardens Bill [Bill 186]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Chaplin*) .. 1780

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Mr. Arch.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Johns*:)—After further short debate, Question put:—The House *divided*; Ayes 106, Noes 91; Majority 15.—(Div. List, No. 103:)—Debate *adjourned* till *Monday* next.

MOTIONS.

Local Government Provisional Orders (Gas) Bill — *Ordered* (*Mr. Borlase, Mr. Stansfeld*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 222] 1792

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Borlase, Mr. Stansfeld*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 223] 1792

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Borlase, Mr. Stansfeld*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 224] 1793

Local Government Provisional Order (County Divisions) Bill — *Ordered* (*Mr. Borlase, Mr. Stansfeld*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 225] .. 1793

Friendly Societies Act (1875) Amendment Bill — *Ordered* (*Mr. Norton, Viscount Folkestone, Sir Herbert Maxwell, Mr. Hoyle*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 228] 1793

[1.45.]

LORDS, MONDAY, MAY 24.

Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill (No. 62)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Duke of Saint Albans*) .. 1793

Amendment *moved*, to leave out ("now,") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months,")—(*The Duke of Argyll.*)

After debate, on Question, That ("now") stand part of the Motion? their Lordships *divided;* Contents 127, Not-Contents 149; Majority 22:—*Resolved* in the *negative.*

Division List, Contents and Not-Contents 1818

Bill to be read 2ª on *this day six months.* [7.45.]

COMMONS, MONDAY, MAY 24.

QUESTIONS.

Post Office—Secrecy of Telegrams—Question, Dr. Cameron; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1821

Royal Irish Constabulary—Pensions—Question, Sir Thomas Esmonde; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) .. 1822

Income Tax (Great Britain and Ireland) — Question, Sir Joseph M'Kenna; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1823

Scotland—Island of Skye—School and Poor Rates—Question, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answer. The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) 1823

Crime and Outrage (Ireland)—Disturbances near Cookstown—Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1824

Arms (Ireland) Act—Licences—Question, Mr. Gilhooly; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1824

Admiralty—Pay of Coastguardsmen—Question, The Earl of March; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) .. 1826

Government of Ireland Bill—The Civil Servants—Question, Mr. Stanley Leighton; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1826

Police Superannuation Bill—Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) .. 1827

Poor Law (Ireland)—Edenderry Infirmary—Question, Mr. Biggar; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) .. 1827

Navy (Ordnance, &c.)—Naval Guns—Questions, Commander Bethell, Mr. Carbutt; Answers, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Woodall) 1828

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOL BOARD SCHOOLS—Question, Sir R. Assheton Cross; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) 1829

SECRET SERVICE MONEY—Questions, Mr. Albert Grey, Mr. Brodrick, Mr. Boord, Sir Julian Goldsmid; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) 1829

NORTH AMERICA—CANADIAN FISHERIES—Question, Sir Frederick Stanley; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Osborne Morgan) 1831

ARMY QUARTERMASTERS—Question, Colonel Duncan; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell Bannerman) 1832

INLAND REVENUE—INCOME TAX ON FOREIGN RESIDENTS—Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt) 1833

EVICTIONS (SCOTLAND)—ARDNAMURCHAN—Question, Mr. Macfarlane; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) 1833

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION IN BOARD SCHOOLS—Question, Sir Bernhard Samuelson; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) 1833

NAVY—H.M.S. "COLLINGWOOD"—BURSTING OF THE 43-TON GUN—Question, Mr. Seager Hunt; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Woodall) 1834

NAVY—H.M.S. "CALYPSO"—Question, Captain Verney; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) 1834

CATTLE MARKETS — WEIGHING MACHINES — Question, Mr. Seton-Karr; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Mr. C. T. D. Acland) .. 1835

REGISTRATION OF VOTERS—EXPENSES OF THE FRANCHISE—Questions, Mr. Leahy, Mr. P. J. O'Brien, Mr. P. M'Donald; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) 1835

THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL—Questions, Mr. Richard, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone:)—Short debate thereon 1836

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—*considered* in Committee—CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS— (In the Committee.)

(1.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a further sum, not exceeding £2,266,400, be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charge for the following Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, viz:— [Then the several Services are set forth] 1842

Moved, "That the Item of £5,000, for Secret Service, be omitted from the proposed Vote,"—(*Mr. Rylands*:)—After debate, Question put:—The Committee *divided;* Ayes 44, Noes 319; Majority 275.—(Div. List, No. 104.)

Original Question again proposed 1872

After short debate, *Moved*, "That the Item of £2,500 (Scotch Fishery Board), be omitted from the proposed Vote,"—(*Mr. Biggar*:)—After further short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question again proposed 1901

After debate, *Moved*, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. Brodrick*:)—After further short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question again proposed 1951

Moved, "That the Item of £2,000 (Registrar General, Ireland), be omitted from the proposed Vote,"—(*Mr. Chance*:)—After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question again proposed 1959

After short debate, *Moved*, "That the Item of £20,000, for Superannuation and Retired Allowances, be reduced by the sum of £160,"—(*Captain Verney*:)—Question put, and *negatived.*

Original Question again proposed 1964

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS—Committee—*continued.*

Moved, "That the Item of £120,000, for the Post Office Telegraphs, be reduced by the sum of £100,"—(*Dr. Cameron*:)—After short debate, Question put:—The Committee *divided*; Ayes 54, Noes 116; Majority 62.—(Div. List, No. 105.)
Original Question again proposed 1969
After short debate, Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

ARMY.

(2.) £3,282,000, Provisions, Forage, &c.

NAVY ESTIMATES.

(3.) £207,600, Coast Guard Service and Royal Naval Reserves, &c.
(4.) £113,200. Scientific Branch.—After short debate, Vote *agreed to* .. 1971
(5.) £812,900, Half-Pay, Reserved Half-Pay, and Retired Pay to Officers of the Navy and Marines.

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow;* Committee to sit again upon *Wednesday*.

Ulster Canal and Tyrone Navigation Bill [Bill 141]—
Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [18th May:]—
Question again proposed:—Debate *resumed* 1974
Question put, and *agreed to*:—Other Members *nominated.*

DIVORCE BILLS—
Select Committee *nominated*:—List of the Committee 1974

[2.30.]

LORDS.

SAT FIRST.

Monday, May 17.

The Lord Forester, after the death of his brother.

Monday, May 24.

The Lord Brougham and Vaux, after the death of his father.

COMMONS.

NEW MEMBERS SWORN.

Monday, May 3.

Bradford (*Central Division*)—Right Hon. George Shaw Lefevre.

North-East Lancashire (*Clitheroe Division*)—Right Hon. Sir Ughtred James Kay-Shuttleworth, baronet.

Ipswich—Hugo Richard Charteris, commonly called Lord Elcho.

HANSARD'S

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

IN THE

First Session OF THE *Twenty-Third Parliament* OF THE
United Kingdom OF *Great Britain* AND *Ireland*,
APPOINTED TO MEET 12 January, 1886, IN THE Forty-ninth
Year OF THE Reign OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

FOURTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1886.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 19*th April*, 1886.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*Ordered — First Reading*—Tramways Provisional Orders (No. 1) * [195]; Gas Provisional Orders (No. 1) * [196]; Police and Improvement (Scotland) Provisional Order (Leith) * [197].

First Reading — Lunacy Acts Amendment * [198].

Select Committee — Employers' Liability Act (1880) Amendment * (60), Colonel Blundell and Mr. Hingley *added.*

Committee — Police Forces Enfranchisement [3], *deferred.*

Committee—Report—Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2) [*Sixth Night*] [118-200].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

——o——

NORTH METROPOLITAN TRAMWAYS (No. 2) BILL.

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir Charles Forster.*)

Mr. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I had placed upon the Paper a Notice of my intention to move that this Bill should be referred to a Hybrid Committee; but having regard to the course adopted by the House on Friday upon the Cricklewood, Kilburn, and Harrow Road Tramways Bill, I do not propose to move that Reference. I prefer to act upon the suggestion of the hon.

Gentleman the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means (Mr. Courtney), and to move for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the operation of the Tramways Act, 1870, the powers of Tramways Companies, and the management of tramways.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed.*

PRIVATE BILLS.

Ordered, That Standing Orders 39 and 129 be suspended, and that the time for depositing Petitions against Private Bills, or against any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order, or Provisional Certificate, and for depositing Duplicates of any Documents relating to any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order, or Provisional Certificate, be extended to Monday 3rd May.—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means.*)

QUESTIONS.

ARMY—THE PURCHASE SYSTEM—PURCHASE LIEUTENANTS.

Sir RICHARD PAGET (Somerset, Wells) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether Officers in the Army, having paid £700 or more in the purchase of their Lieutenancies previous to the Abolition of Purchase in the Army, will be allowed, on retirement from the Service, any advantages in respect of the money so paid; and, whether Officers, having entered the Army since the Abolition of Purchase, and paid nothing for their Commissions, will receive the same retiring allowances as others having paid large sums?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) (Stirling, &c.): This Question was fully answered on August 4, 1881, by my right hon. Friend the present Home Secretary. The suggestion is, I suppose, based on the fact that a purchase captain does in his retired pay receive some compensation for his purchase money; but I would point out that such compensation is given only in respect of the over-regulation sum which the captain could have realized on selling his commission. This averaged from £600 to £700; and if the officer attained higher rank before being pensioned it was held that the increased retired pay of the higher rank included all compensation due to purchase rights. In the case of purchase lieutenants the over-regulation money was only £100 on the average, and as they must necessarily be pensioned from a higher rank no question of compensation can arise.

ARMY (PENSIONS)—CASE OF JAMES KELLY, ARMY PENSIONER.

Mr. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is true that James Kelly, Army pensioner, Newbliss, county Monaghan, late of the 16th Brigade Royal Artillery, was engaged in service in Meerut, East India, when, by the capsizing of a field gun, he sustained such serious injuries that he was under medical treatment from December 1872 to March 1874, when he was discharged from the Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, after having one of his arms amputated, a portion of his left jaw, which was fractured, removed, with the sight of one of his eyes seriously affected, and his hearing almost destroyed; whether he was discharged on a pension of one shilling per day for eighteen months, which was subsequently, after submitting himself to two medical examinations, increased to one shilling and six pence per day for life; whether Kelly applied for, and was granted, a further medical examination, which was held at Armagh in August 1883, with the view of establishing his claim to a higher pension, at which examination, owing to the fact that he was only required to answer the usual formal questions not applicable to the gravity of his case, and, being very nervous and delicate at the time, he failed to direct the medical examiner's attention to the number and nature of his injuries; whether Kelly since forwarded to the War Office a petition, accompanied by the recommendations of eight medical doctors, praying for another medical examination, the expenses of which he declared his willingness to bear, and which prayer was refused; and, whether, taking into consideration the services, sufferings, losses, and present deplorable condition of this man, he will afford him the desired opportunity, by another medical examination, of proving his claim to a more generous pension?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) (Stirling, &c.): Sir, steps are being taken to have a full inquiry into the case of this pensioner.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—GLIN UNION, CO. LEITRIM—QUALIFICATION FOR GUARDIAN.

MR. STACK (Kerry, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the rating qualification for a guardian in the Leitrim (county Kerry) division of Glin Union is £25, and only five persons resident in the division are rated over that amount, of whom two are disqualified by being evicted from their farms; whether he is aware that at the last election the ratepayers had to nominate a candidate who does not live in the Leitrim division but in the county Limerick; and, whether he would consider the advisability of recommending the Local Government Board to lower the rating in this division to £15?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The facts are substantially as stated in the Question. It is the intention of the Local Government Board to consider the question of reducing the qualification before the next election occurs in the division.

LIGHTHOUSES (IRELAND)—BEREHAVEN LIGHTHOUSE.

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork, W.) asked the President of the Board of Trade, If he is aware that it is essentially necessary for the success of the fishing industry in Bantry Bay that the Lighthouse at the western end of Bere Ireland should be utilised; and, if he will take the necessary steps to accomplish that object?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside): The Commissioners of Irish Lights inform me that before the tower at the western end of Bere Island was finished the idea of exhibiting a light from it was abandoned, owing to the difficulty of sailing vessels navigating up the western channel in consequence of its narrowness. On this decision being taken the present Berehaven Light was at once commenced.

INLAND REVENUE (INCOME TAX)—BUILDING SOCIETIES.

MR. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, seeing that several permanent Building Societies still refuse to allow Income Tax on interest, he will instruct the Solicitor to the Inland Revenue to enforce penalties for each refusal in accordance with the Act 16 and 17 Vic. c. 34, s. 40?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby): These instructions are not necessary. The solicitor to the Inland Revenue is always prepared, under instructions from the Board of Inland Revenue, to institute proceedings for penalties in any cases where they appear to have been incurred. All cases of refusal on the part of Building Societies to allow Income Tax on interest which have hitherto been brought under the notice of the Board of Inland Revenue have been satisfactorily settled without the aid of legal proceedings.

THE MAGISTRACY (SCOTLAND)—THE GAELIC LANGUAGE.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether, in filling up the vacant office of Sheriff Substitute at Portree, he will take care that the person to be appointed shall have, with other qualifications, a knowledge of the Gaelic language?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c): It is, no doubt, desirable that officials in the Highlands should be able to speak Gaelic, if this qualification can be obtained with the other qualifications requisite. The point will be duly considered in filling up the office referred to.

ARMY STORES—MILITARY TENTS.

MR. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) (for Mr. MURPHY) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether the Military tents stored at Arbour Hill Barracks, Dublin, were formerly kept in repair locally and in a satisfactory manner; whether, of late years, it is the practice to get those tents repaired in England at a greater cost, including carriage both ways, than before the present system was adopted; what was the reason of this change; and, will arrangements be made that the repairs shall in future be executed in Dublin?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): No change has been made in the system of having tents repaired. Tents stored in Dublin are repaired there by local labour, and in the interests of economy local repairs are always encouraged. When tents in Ireland are condemned locally they are forwarded to Woolwich for ultimate disposal. Occasionally these are found susceptible of repair, and after repair would be re-issued. Possibly the case of some of these tents may have suggested the hon. Member's Question.

REGISTRATION OF VOTERS—THE VESTRY CLERK OF ST. PANCRAS.

MR. BAGGALLAY (Lambeth, Brixton) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether he is aware that, by the byelaws of the vestry of St. Pancras (Part III. Rule 7), one of the duties of the vestry clerk and clerk to the directors of the poor to prepare the lists of voters and to attend at the revision of such lists, and that the vestry clerk received the sum of £10 10*s.* for doing one or both of such duties in 1885; whether it is any part of the duty of the overseers or their clerk to collect information as to lodgers' claims at the expense of the ratepayers; is he aware that Mr. George Harrison, chief clerk of the vestry, represented Mr. Gibb, the vestry clerk, at the revising barrister's court in 1885, and shortly afterwards issued the following Circular to the officers of the vestry—

> "Dear Sir,—A meeting of the officers of the vestry and guardians will be held in the Board Rooms on Monday next at 5.30 p.m. to consider the steps to be taken to assist Mr. Gibb in his Parliamentary candidature. Your attendance is particularly requested.
>
> "Yours faithfully,
> "Alfred A. Millward,
> "George Harrison;"

and, will he take steps to provide, by legislation or otherwise, that, in future, no official, whose duty it may be to prepare the lists of voters, take active part either as a candidate or active political partisan in any Parliamentary election within the district in which he is employed?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. STANSFELD) (Halifax): It appears that such a bye-law as that referred to in the first part of the Question was made more than 30 years ago; but I am informed that it is now, practically, obsolete. A sum of 10 guineas was paid to the Vestry Clerk as an acknowledgment of the assistance given to the Revising Barrister at the evening sittings, the cost of the preparation of the list of voters being about £900. I understand that it is not the duty of the overseers of the parish to obtain information as to lodgers' claims at the expense of the rates, and that no expense was incurred by them under this head. Mr. Harrison did represent the Vestry Clerk at the Revising Barrister's Court in 1885, and the letter referred to in the Question was circulated among the officers of the Guardians and Vestry. As regards the concluding inquiry, which is of a general character, I can only say that if an officer who has duties in connection with the preparation of the list of voters is to be precluded from becoming a candidate in a Parliamentary election within the district in which he is employed, it can only be done by express legislation, and that this is a matter which may have to be considered in connection with any Registration Bill which may be introduced by the Government.

MR. BAGGALLAY: Is the right hon. Gentleman prepared to suggest that the question should be dealt with in such a Bill?

MR. STANSFELD: I am not prepared to make any suggestion; but I can promise the matter will have attention.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—VENTILATION OF THE HOUSE.

MR. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham) asked the honourable Member for Manchester (South), Chairman of the Ventilation Committee, Whether the temporary but effective measures for preventing, as much as possible, the air of the Palace of Westminster from being contaminated with sewer gas emanating from the low level sewer of the main drainage of the Metropolis, adverted to in the interim Report of the Committee, will be carried out during the Easter Recess?

SIR HENRY ROSCOE (Manchester, S.), in reply, said, that the Committee on the Ventilation of the House brought under the notice of the proper officer of Her Majesty's Board of Works the desirability of at once carrying out the temporary measures referred to in the interim Report of the Committee for effectually preventing the air of the Palace of Westminster from being contaminated with sewer gas emanating from the low level sewer of the main drainage of the Metropolis, and they had received the assurance of that officer that the proposed measures could, in his opinion, be executed before the House re-assembled after the Easter Recess. They had, moreover, reason to believe that the Board of Works did not look otherwise than favourably on the proposal.

MR. BAUMANN said, what he wanted to know was not whether the works could be done, but whether they would be done?

SIR HENRY ROSCOE said, that the Committee had no power to order the works to be carried out.

MR. LEVESON GOWER (A LORD of the TREASURY) (Stafford, N.W.) said, that the Board of Works fully recognized the importance of having the works done at once. It was a very important matter. No effort would be spared, and they were in hopes that the improvements would be finished by the time the House met again.

LAW AND JUSTICE (SCOTLAND)—CIRCUIT COURTS.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee) asked the Lord Advocate, If his attention has been called to the fact that there are no prisoners for trial at the Circuit Court appointed to be held at Dundee on the 20th April; and, whether he will consider the propriety of making such arrangements as will in future avoid the inconvenience and expense of holding Circuit Courts when there is little or no business to be done?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): It is true that there are no prisoners for trial at the Circuit Court to be held at Dundee tomorrow. But it is possible that there may be complaints and civil appeals; and, further, as the Court is held under statutory authority, no such arrangements as the hon. Member points at can be made by the Judges. As no jurymen have been summoned, and the officials only require to attend, the inconvenience and expense occasioned by the holding of the Court will not be serious.

INDIA—VETERINARY SURGEONS.

MR. JUSTIN M'CARTHY (Longford, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether it is intended to reduce the number of Senior Veterinary Surgeons in India, and to supply their places with Junior Veterinary Surgeons from the Indian Civil Service; and, whether, at present, the number of skilled surgeons is found insufficient for the work, owing to the amount of contagious disease among elephants, horses, and mules?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. STAFFORD HOWARD) (Gloucester, Thornbury): As was stated to the House on March 12 last, in reply to a Question from the hon. and gallant Member for Holborn (Colonel Duncan), a reduction in the Veterinary Establishment in India has been sanctioned by the Secretary of State in Council, on the recommendation of the Government of India. There is, however, so far as I am aware, no desire to alter the existing proportions of senior and junior officers in the Department. There is at present no Civil Veterinary Department in India; but the creation of a Civil branch of the Service is at present under consideration. No representation has been made by the Government of India that the number of skilled surgeons in the country is insufficient.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—MR. W. L. BOLE, J.P., CO. LONGFORD.

MR. JUSTIN M'CARTHY (Longford, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is the fact that Mr. William L. Bole, a magistrate for the county of Longford, refused to sign the statutory declaration of Patrick Kelly and others for proxy votes at the recent election of a Guardian for the Agharra Electoral Division of the Ballymahon Union; whether the day on which the proxies were tendered was the last day on which they could be signed; and, whether, in consequence, the proxies were of no avail?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, that he was informed that at the time Mr Bole was applied to he was extremely busy, and told Kelly there were two other magistrates in the town who could sign the paper, and referred him to them. There being no contest or second nomination in the Electoral Division for the last three years, it did not appear to have in any way affected the result of the election.

THE ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE—VACANT LAND.

Mr. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.) asked the honourable Member for North West Staffordshire, Whether he will consider the propriety of laying out the vacant land on the west side of the Royal Courts of Justice as an ornamental garden for the use of the public?

Mr. LEVESON GOWER (A Lord of the Treasury) (Stafford, N.W.): It is not proposed to lay out as a public recreation ground the land in question, which will be required at no distant time for the extension of the Courts of Justice. A Departmental Committee has recently reported in this sense.

Mr. T. H. BOLTON asked, whether the hon. Gentleman would consider the propriety, at all events, of making some slight alterations by fixing ornamental railings and laying down grass, in order that the grounds might be made more sightly than they now were?

Mr. LEVESON GOWER said, he would bring the matter before the notice of the First Commissioner of Works.

AFRICA (WEST COAST)—RIO DEL REY.

Mr. HUTTON (Manchester, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether, under the engagements entered into between the Governments of Great Britain and Germany in April and May 1885, British traders established on the territories of the right bank of the Rio del Rey, on the West Coast of Africa, or established on any of the affluents of the right bank of that river, will be within the boundary of the British protectorate, and able to carry on their trade there under British jurisdiction?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): The territories on the right bank of the Rio del Rey fall within the area over which the British Protectorate extends, and British traders there will have the benefit of any British jurisdiction which may be constituted.

WAR OFFICE ESTABLISHMENT—SUPPLEMENTARY CLERKS.

Mr. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether a Memorial has been received from the Supplementary Clerks of the War Office, supported by the opinion of counsel, alleging that several of these gentlemen are suffering from a breach of faith as to their prospects of official advancement; and, if so, whether he will consider the expediency of taking such steps as may be necessary to remedy the grievances complained of?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) (Stirling, &c.): I have seen the Memorial referred to; but I have not had time since I came into Office to go thoroughly into the question raised in it. The hon. Member may be sure that it will not be neglected.

INDIA (BENGAL)—THE GOVERNMENT COLLEGE OF KISHNAGHUR.

Sir ROPER LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether it is the intention of the Government of Bengal to withdraw in any degree State aid or State control from the Government College of Kishnaghur; and, whether such withdrawal constitutes a breach of the understanding on which the Government College of Kishnaghur was endowed by local subscription in 1876?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Stafford Howard) (Gloucester, Thornbury): The subject is one which it is within the competence of the Government of India to decide, and the Secretary of State in Council has received no information about it.

THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—TRANSFERS FROM DOWNPATRICK.

Mr. COX (Clare, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he can state the reasons why Constables Lockington, Orr, M'Guigan, and Cameron have been removed from Downpatrick?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The four constables named were removed because they could not agree amongst themselves; and it was considered necessary, for the peace of the station and the discipline of the Service, that they should be removed.

LIGHTHOUSES (IRELAND)—CARLINGFORD LOUGH LIGHTHOUSES.

Mr. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he is aware that for several years the keepers of the Carlingford Lough Lighthouse have been kept in Kilkeel at lodgings of an inconvenient and insufficient character and in a highly unsanitary state, although much superior accommodation could be obtained at a smaller annual outlay than at present; and, whether any steps will be taken to remedy this state of things?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Mundella) (Sheffield, Brightside) (who replied) said: The Commissioners of Irish Lights inform me that no lightkeepers reside at Kilkeel. The keepers of the Carlingford Lough leading lights live at Greencastle, in lodgings paid for by the Commissioners. It is proposed to build dwellings for the use of the keepers at Greencastle. The intention has been delayed owing to the excessive compensation demanded by the tenants of the property. Proposals have been received for letting other lodgings which are not better than those at present occupied by the keepers. Until the Commissioners have built their own houses they do not think it advisable to enter into other arrangements.

RAILWAYS (IRELAND)—RAILWAY RATES.

Mr. SMITHWICK (Kilkenny) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether his attention has been called to the anomaly that the Railway rate upon the Great Southern and Western Line (Ireland) for the carriage of porter is fifteen shillings per ton from Kilkenny City to Dublin, being a distance of 81 miles, whereas the same commodity and quantity is carried from Cork to Dublin, being a distance of 165½ miles, for the same charge of fifteen shillings per ton; and, whether he will cause inquiries to be made, in view of the promised legislation, in order that the necessity of relieving the public from such inequality of Railway rates may be established?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Mundella) (Sheffield, Brightside): No, Sir; my attention has not been called to the case to which the hon. Gentleman refers; but I have directed a communication to be made to the Company, with a view to learning the exact facts of the case. Supposing these to be as stated, nothing can be done beyond an appeal to the Railway Commissioners until the Bill now before the House is passed into law.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—RESIDENT MAGISTRATES.

Mr. TREVELYAN (Hawick, &c.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the position of Resident Magistrates will be governed, as regards their tenure of office and personal prospects, by the provisions applied to Civil Servants in Ireland under Clause 29 of the Government of Ireland Bill?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The answer to my right hon. Friend's Question is in the affirmative. The Bill distinguishes between those persons, such as Judges and County Chairmen, whose salaries are by law charged on the Consolidated Fund, and all ordinary Civil servants who are paid out of moneys voted by Parliament. The Resident Magistrates belong to the latter class, and they are dealt with, like other Civil servants, by Clause 29 of the Bill.

CONTINUANCE SITTINGS BILL.

Mr. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked Mr. Attorney General, If he can inform the House whether the Lord Chancellor has come to any decision in reference to the representations which were made to him by the deputation which waited upon him in reference to the Continuance Sittings Bill in the Provinces?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Charles Russell) (Hackney, S.), in reply, said, that he had received from the Secretary to the Lord Chancellor a communication to the effect that he had seen the Judges since the deputation on this subject attended in London, and, with their Lordships' assent, he had it in contemplation to alter the existing Rules by removing the restrictions which limit the facilities of trial in Lancashire. The Lord Chancellor had also under consideration, and hoped to be able to provide a scheme, by which the administrative business of causes proceeding in the District Registries of Manchester and Liverpool might be prosecuted locally and not necessarily in London.

LAW AND POLICE (ENGLAND)—EVICTION OF MINERS IN DURHAM.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, having regard to the Memorials he has received from the ratepayers and from the miners of South Medomsley, he will suggest to the magistrates for the county of Durham the expediency of directing a thorough and impartial inquiry into the alleged improper conduct of the police during the recent evictions at South Medomsley Colliery?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): My hon. Friend is aware that I have no authority over the Durham police, and that all I can do on such a Question as this being asked in the House of Commons is to call for information from the police authorities. I have done so, and it is not my opinion that on this occasion the police acted improperly. The remedy which the complainants have, if they are still unsatisfied, is to take proceedings before the Justices against the constables for excess of duty.

CEYLON—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, If it is true that in 1878 the Colonial Office sanctioned an expenditure of one million pounds sterling to construct two-thirds, or forty-two miles, of a railway line intended to reach new traffic in the province of Uva, Ceylon, but up to the present the officials at the Colonial Office have declined, in the face of urgent appeals from two Governors and their Executive Councils, annual Memorials from the natives, planters, and merchants, to sanction the half million necessary to construct the remaining one-third, or twenty-five miles, and that, in consequence, the interest on the million pounds sterling cannot be earned?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN) (Denbighshire, E.): It is true that in 1878 the then Secretary of State sanctioned an expenditure of £1,000,000 sterling on the line referred to in the Question, on the distinct assurance that it would pay without any regard to its possible extension. The hon. Member is mistaken in supposing that the officials at the Colonial Office, who are simply the servants of the Secretary of State, have ever given any decision on this or any other Colonial matter of business. The late Secretary of State (Sir Frederick Stanley), after giving the matter his most careful consideration, reluctantly arrived at the conclusion that the estimates of the earnings of the proposed extension line would not warrant the cost—estimated at between £18,000 and £19,000 per mile—of constructing it. When I state that between 1877 and 1884 the Revenue of Ceylon fell from over Rs.17.000,000 to Rs.12,500,000, while its debts increased from £1,000,000 sterling to £2,200,000 sterling, and that in such a Colony there are always other important reproductive works claiming attention when such matters are under consideration, the hon. Member will, I am sure, see how impossible it is for the Home Government, with every desire to provide facilities of transport for the planters, to whom the Colony is largely indebted for its prosperity, to sanction projects which cannot be shown to pay interest and provide a Sinking Fund on the amount borrowed for the purpose. I may add that public opinion in the Colony is by no means unanimous on the scheme, and that the two unofficial Members who represent the Native interest on the Council spoke and divided the Legislative Council against it.

PARLIAMENT—CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS—THE STEPNEY ELECTION.

MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) asked Mr. Attorney General, Whether his attention has been drawn to the decision of the Judges in the Stepney election petition, to the effect that a Member against whom no illegal practices of any kind have been proved, but whose return has been unsuccessfully challenged by a scrutiny, may be compelled to bear the enormous costs of defending his seat, while the Petitioner who has initiated the litigation and whose claim to have had the majority of legal votes has been conclusively disproved, is released from payment of any part of the costs to which he has put the sitting Member, on the ground that the Judges, in the exercise of their discretion, considered there was a reasonable case for inquiry; and, whether, having regard to the limit of expenses fixed by "The Corrupt Practices Act, 1883," by which candidature for Parliament was believed to be open to men of moderate means and not to be exclusively within the reach of men of wealth, he will consider the desirability of limiting by Legislation the discretion of the Judges in awarding costs?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Charles Russell) (Hackney, S.), in reply, said, that the facts, as stated in the first part of the Question, seemed, so far as he (the Attorney General) knew, to be accurately set out. He had no hesitation in saying that, in view of these facts, the case seemed to be a very hard one. He had not, however, the whole of the facts fully before him, or within his knowledge; and it would be presumptuous and wrong for him to attempt to pronounce an opinion as to the discretion the Judges had thought proper to exercise. With regard to the question whether it would be desirable to limit by legislation the discretion of Judges in awarding costs, he thought it was not undesirable that the costs should be made to follow the event, unless for good causes the Judges decided otherwise. This was already the case in ordinary litigations in the High Courts; and he (the Attorney General) believed the same rule was supposed to be substantially followed in the case of Election Petitions. He would mention the matter to the Lord Chancellor, with the view of ascertaining whether any change was desirable.

METROPOLIS—RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Mr. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether he can explain the delay which has taken place in the commencement of the Paddington and Limehouse Railway, the South Eastern Railway extension in Southwark and Bermondsey; and, whether, taking into consideration the serious loss entailed by suspense and uncertainty upon the shopkeepers and owners and occupiers of property in the scheduled area, and the great amount of unemployed labour in the Metropolis, he can take any steps to expedite the commencement of the works referred to?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Mundella) (Sheffield, Brightside): I have no information with regard to the Question put to me by the hon. Member, as the Board of Trade has no power to act in the matter. I may add that the time limited for the completion of the works in question is fixed by special Act of Parliament in each case, and in the event of that being overstepped they would be liable to a penalty of the loss of deposit. I have forwarded a copy of the hon. Member's Question to the respective Railway Companies.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—CASE OF G. GIBBS AND P. MULLENS.

Mr. SHEEHY (Galway, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether two men, named George Gibbs and Patrick Mullens, were prosecuted at the Gort Petty Sessions on the 31st October last, for an assault on two men named Claran and Linskey; whether Gibbs was sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour, and Mullens to 14 days; whether Gibbs's solicitor applied to the Bench to have one day added to Gibbs's sentence, to give him power to appeal, which was refused; whether Gibbs only learned when he was lodged in gaol that his term was to be two months; whether Gibbs, in carrying with another prisoner a barrow of coal, slipped and fell under the coal he was carrying, and broke his leg; whether when discharged from the prison, Gibbs still suffering from his leg, was with two securities summoned, he being under a rule of bail, and his recognizances estreated, he being fined £2, and his sureties £1 each; and, whether, having regard to all the circumstances, some compensation will be made to him for the injury he received in the prison; or, at least, will the fines be remitted?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, the assaults committed in this instance appeared to be entirely unprovoked; and the Bench, in the exercise of their discretion, sentenced Mullens to 14 days' imprisonment, and Gibbs, who committed two assaults and had been bound to the peace previously, to two months' imprisonment with hard labour, being a month for each assault. Gibbs sprained his ankle in prison; but the medical officer stated that he was nearly all right when he was released. The magistrates estreated his recognizances, but, in consideration of the injury he received, reduced the amount from £10 and £5 to £2 and £1. The case did not appear to call for further consideration.

ALLOTMENTS EXTENSION ACT, 1882—LEGISLATION.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, looking to the neglect of the trustees of parochial charities to carry out the provisions of "The Allotments Extension Act, 1882," he could say approximately when the Government would be in a position to introduce the Local Self Government Bill?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. STANSFELD) (Halifax): My right hon. Friend has requested me to answer this Question. My hon. Friend correctly assumes that the subject of allotments and of small holdings will be dealt with by Her Majesty's Government in the Local Government Bill, if not by a separate measure. Her Majesty's Government are fully conscious of the importance of the subject in the interests of the agricultural population. I regret that I am not at this moment in a position to make a statement as to the time when I shall be enabled to ask leave to introduce a Local Government Bill; but I can assure my hon. Friend that there will be no avoidable delay in so doing.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA (THE JOINT COMMITTEE).

MR. MAGNIAC (Bedford, N., Biggleswade) asked, Whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer could say on what day after the Recess the subject of the Indian Committee would be taken; or, if he could not fix a day, whether reasonable Notice would be given?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby): in reply, said, that reasonable Notice would be given.

THE DOMINION OF CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES — TREATY OF WASHINGTON — FISHERY DISPUTES.

MR. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether overt acts of aggression, as between Canadian and American fishermen in the Bay of Fundy, have recently taken place; whether the United States Government has brought the matter to the attention of Her Majesty's Government; and whether steps are now being taken by the Canadian or the Imperial Government to put an end to these disturbing fishery disputes?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN) (Denbighshire, E.): I am not surprised at the hon. Member putting the Question, which, perhaps, ought properly to be answered by the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. No representation has been received from the Government of the United States as to any acts of aggression by United States or Canadian fishermen in the Bay of Fundy, nor has any official information been received showing that such acts have taken place. The Fishery Clauses of the Treaty of Washington, having been denounced by the United States Government, lapsed in July, 1885, and a temporary arrangement for continuing their operation for the then current fishing season has now also expired. The United States Senate having rejected the proposal of the Government of that country to appoint an International Commission to consider the best means of settling the question on equitable terms, the rights of Canadian and American fishermen are now remitted to the position in which they were placed by the Convention of 1818. If any dispute should arise as to the exercise of these rights, the House may rest assured that no effort will be spared by Her Majesty's Government to settle them with as little friction as possible.

LAND PURCHASES (IRELAND).

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with regard to the Land Act of last Session, How many farms above the value of £100 per annum had been purchased; and, what was the total rental and purchase of what had been sanctioned?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The number of farms of over £100 a-year rental that have been purchased is 65, and the amount sanctioned for their purchase is £171,797. The largest purchase is a rent of £450 a-year. This has been bought, subject to a head rent of £122, for £4,550, of which the Land Commissioners advanced £3,000. I am unable to say now what is the total rent of the farms whose purchase has so far been sanctioned, nor can I say how many years' purchase the amount sanctioned is of the gross rental. I understand it would take some days to get out this information, and I only got my hon. Friend's Notice yesterday.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, What Business would be taken on the Monday and the Thursday after the Recess; and, also, whether he intended to proceed with the Budget Bill to-night?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby), in reply, said, he understood the Civil Service Estimates would be taken on the Monday; and, of course, if the right hon. Gentleman wished the Budget Bill not to be taken to-night, he would not take it.

MR. W. O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.): As the Land Bill was not circulated this morning, I would like to ask the Chief Secretary whether the Government intends to make any provision in the Bill dealing with the case of the purchasers of Church Lands in Ireland?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I regret to say that at the present stage we have been unable to include any provision in the scheme in regard to that matter.

MR. W. O'BRIEN: Can you give any hope that the claims of the purchasers of Church lands will be dealt with in any other shape?

MR. JOHN MORLEY: I would rather not commit myself at this moment to any further statement.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: The right hon. Gentleman has not stated when the Bill will be circulated.

MR. JOHN MORLEY: I have seen the draftsman to-day, and he assures me that it will be circulated not later than Wednesday morning.

In reply to Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH,

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT said, the Government proposed to take the Budget Bill on the Monday after the Recess, as it was very desirable that it should be disposed of before they came to the discussion of the Irish Bills.

MR. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne) asked when the Railway and Canal Traffic Bill was likely to be taken?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside), in reply, said, he only wished he had been able to give the hon. Member a positive answer as to when the Bill would be likely to come on. It all depended on what progress was made with the Crofters Bill. If that Bill were got out of the way to-night, he proposed to take the Railway Bill on the Thursday after Easter.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

CROFTERS (SCOTLAND) (No. 2) BILL.

(*Mr. Trevelyan, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.*)

[BILL 118.] COMMITTEE.

[*Progress 15th April.*]

[SIXTH NIGHT.]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 14 (Assigned Land).

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): As this is the last clause in Part 5 which deals with the enlargement of holdings, I should like to make a few brief observations to the Committee before the clause is added to the Bill. I look upon it as a good principle to make provision for the enlargement of crofters' holdings upon fair terms when there is available land conveniently adjacent to that already in the occupancy of the crofters. But I feel bound to say that the refusal of the Government to accompany the measure by some provision for pecuniary aid to enable the crofter to stock the enlarged holding materially impairs the value of the concession. The Committee, in this part of the Bill, have been engaged in imposing numerous restrictions upon the enlargement of crofters' holdings in the interests of the landlord; and, as the matter now stands, I am afraid that all these restrictions, together with an entire absence of pecuniary aid, will render the number of cases in which the Bill will be applicable practically *nil*. This part of the measure is only to be made operative in the event of the crofters who make an application to the Land Commission showing that they have the means of stocking it; and, therefore, I am afraid that the number of cases in which the enlargement of the holding will be sanctioned will be an infinitesimal fraction of the number of persons who ought to receive benefit. I am strongly of opinion that, if these clauses are intended to apply at all, provision ought to be made by which the crofters should be able to obtain pecuniary assistance. If the crofter does not possess the means of stocking the holding—and I am afraid there will hardly be a case of that kind, considering the present circumstances of the Highlands—the result will be that these clauses will remain altogether inoperative; because the tenant, if he does not obtain the additional land under the Bill, will hardly get it voluntarily from the landlord. And if the crofter has the means of stocking it, it is scarcely probable that the landlord would refuse to enlarge his holding, even without these provisions of the Bill. I feel bound to express my extreme regret that Her Majesty's Government should have brought in a Bill embodying such good principles, and yet should make it practically inoperative by refusing to give to the crofters the only means by which they could take advantage of it.

The CHAIRMAN: I must point out to the hon. Gentleman that his remarks upon this clause are very wide.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: I only wished to express my objection to the clause as it stands. The refusal of the Government to accompany it by pecuniary aid is to me astounding, after the proposals which have been made to provide millions for the relief of Irish landlords.

Motion *agreed to.*

Clause 15 (Appointment of three Commissioners).

Dr. R. MACDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): The first part of this clause provides that, with a view to the execution of the Act, it shall be lawful for Her Majesty to appoint three Commissioners, who are designated in the Bill as "the Land Commission." The object of the Amendment which I am about to propose is to provide that all the Commissioners shall speak the Gaelic language. I cannot help thinking that it would be ridiculous and absurd to appoint three Commissioners who can only speak the English language, and who would be altogether unacquainted with the language spoken by the large majority of crofters with whose interests they will have to deal. I believe that it will be very easy indeed to find gentlemen fit to do the work who are able to speak the Gaelic language; and I feel satisfied that, if this proposal is not adopted, there will not only be many misunderstandings, but frequent miscarriages of justice, owing principally to the want of information on the part of the Commissioners. To my mind, it is of the utmost importance that the Commissioners should be able to talk to these people in their own language, and ascertain their grievances from their own mouths, instead of through an interpreter. In any case, the crofters themselves would have much more confidence in the Commission, and would be more satisfied with its decisions, if the Members of it were able to talk to them in their own tongue. I regard this as a matter of very great importance indeed, and I trust that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate will accept it, or, at least, consent to provide that there shall be upon the Commission someone who can speak the Gaelic language.

Amendment proposed, in page 7, line 10, after the word "Commissioners," to insert the words "all of whom can speak the Gaelic language."—(*Dr. R. Macdonald.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B, Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I have no doubt that there is a great deal in what has been said by the hon. Member to justify the appointment of a Gaelic-speaking Commissioner. I would point out, however, that this is a matter for consideration in the administration of the Act, rather than for an express statutory provision in the Bill itself. Although it may be desirable that one or two of the Commissioners should speak Gaelic, I do not think it would be quite safe to put in a statutory restriction of the kind suggested, any more than it would have been to insert in the Irish Act a provision that the Land Commissioners appointed under it should speak Celtic. I admit that the matter is a fair one to be kept in view in administering the Act.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I must confess that I have heard the reply of the Lord Advocate to the proposal of my hon. Friend with great disappointment. The Gaelic language is spoken universally by the people in the part of the country falling under the operation of the Bill. I believe that my hon. Friend will not insist that the whole of the Commissioners should be able to speak Gaelic; and perhaps the objection of the Lord Advocate would be met by the proposal to appoint at least one Commissioner with a knowledge of the Gaelic language. I will therefore move that the Amendment be amended by the insertion of "one" Gaelic-speaking Commissioner.

Amendment proposed to proposed Amendment, by leaving out the word "all," and inserting the word "one." —(*Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'all' stand part of the proposed Amendment."

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate will accept the Amendment as proposed by the hon. Member for Inverness-shire, in order to insure that at least one of the Commissioners should be acquainted with the Gaelic language. Our experience hitherto of legal appointments in the Highlands has not been such as to inspire confidence. In some instances the Procurators Fiscal and Sheriffs are unable to speak Gaelic, with great disadvantage to the people among whom they are required to administer justice. I entirely disagree with the Lord Advocate that it is unnecessary to insert this provision in the Bill. I consider it to be an essential qualification in the appointment of these Commissioners that one of them, at least, should be acquainted with the Gaelic tongue; and to insure that it ought to be specified in the Bill.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member for Ross-shire (Dr. Macdonald) accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for Inverness-shire (Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh)?

DR. R. MACDONALD: Yes; I am prepared to adopt the suggestion that one of the Commissioners shall be able to speak the Gaelic language.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Question proposed, "That the word 'one' stand part of the proposed Amendment."

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I think it is a very fair proposal that one of the Commissioners, at all events, should be acquainted with Gaelic; and, that being the evident feeling of the Committee, I will accept the Amendment.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I quite concur in the view that if a Commissioner can be found who is able to speak the Gaelic language such an appointment would be highly desirable; but I do not think the Committee ought to include such a provision in the Bill. The number of educated persons who possess a knowledge of Gaelic is rapidly diminishing; and if we insert a statutory provision of this kind it might happen, in the course of time, that the Government would be compelled to accept the appointment of a Commissioner who would have no other qualification but that of being able to speak the Gaelic language. I therefore hope that the Lord Advocate will not accept the Amendment.

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): I shall be glad to learn how it is suggested that the Commission shall conduct their investigations if no member of the body be able to understand the language of the people whose cases they have to decide. The result of having no one on the Commission who understood Gaelic would be that interpreters would have to be appointed, which would entail great expense, much difficulty, and probable misunderstandings. I therefore hope that the Lord Advocate will require that one, at all events, of the Commissioners should possess a knowledge of Gaelic.

SIR DONALD CURRIE (Perthshire, W.): I am quite sure that a very large number of the persons in whose interest the Commissioners will have to conduct their inquiries understand no other language than Gaelic. I would only venture to suggest that as the Lord Advocate has already promised that one of the Commissioners shall be able to speak Gaelic he will adhere to his promise, and in making the appointment provide that the most efficient man who can be obtained shall be appointed. I am satisfied that efficient men can be found in Scotland possessing the Gaelic qualification.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I have only one word to say. I am very much surprised that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate should wish to appoint Edinburgh lawyers of a certain number of years' standing, ignorant of the native tongue, into these districts to administer justice to a people who cannot understand a word of English. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman were to go out to India he would find that the most petty official of the Government who is called upon to administer justice to the Natives is required to pass an examination, in order to show that he has a knowledge of the language of the people among whom he is to dwell.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I have already stated that I am prepared to accept the Amendment, and to require as a qualification that one of the Commissioners shall have a knowledge of Gaelic.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I should like to point out to the Committee how the matter stands in regard to the ordinary administration of justice in Scotland. It is certainly incredible to me that in any local parts of Scotland, where all the legal forms are drawn up in English, any difficulty should arise in administering justice, or any dissatisfaction be expressed in consequence of the employment, where necessary, of an interpreter. I cannot see why there should be any more difficulty experienced than there is in the ordinary way in which such cases are dealt with in the Law Courts. I have myself acted as a local Judge in the Highland district, and I have had to administer justice in cases in which scarcely a single witness spoke a word of English. Of course, it was necessary that I should speak to such persons and receive their evidence through an interpreter; but I never found any difficulty, and never heard any dissatisfaction expressed. ["Oh!"] No; not in a single instance, in the whole course of my experience. Nor have I ever heard it said in regard to any case tried in a Criminal Court that an injustice of any kind has been done in consequence of following the ordinary mode of examining a witness who spoke another language through an interpreter. I am afraid that a considerable amount of inconvenience and difficulty may be created if this Amendment is inserted in the clause. The Statute should only provide that fit and proper persons shall be appointed on the Commission. We are axious on this side of the House—and I have no doubt that hon. Members on the other side are equally anxious—that the Commissioners appointed in the Land Court should be gentlemen of the highest qualifications and professional rank. I am sure my right hon. and learned Friend will bear me out when I say that there would be very great difficulty at the present moment in finding efficient men who possess such a knowledge of Gaelic, such practice in and command over the language, which is a very different thing from being merely able to read it, as would give a guarantee that the more important duties of the office would be adequately discharged. I therefore trust that my right hon. and learned Friend will reconsider the matter, and arrive at the conclusion that it is not necessary to include this qualification in the Statute.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I have no doubt that what the right hon. and learned Gentleman says is perfectly true in regard to the Law Courts, and that it is frequently the practice to employ an interpreter; but I hope that in the case of the Land Commission the proceedings will be somewhat more informal, and a knowledge of the language might be of great value where a Commissioner was going over a holding. He would be able to speak to the people and elicit information, which he could not do if he did not know their language.

Mr. RAMSAY (Falkirk, &c.): I can confirm the statement which has been made by the right hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald), and I very much regret that my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate should have assented to the proposal. The greatest drawback from which the Highland people suffer, in providing themselves with labour, and in seeking it elsewhere, is their exclusive knowledge of the Gaelic language. I feel satisfied that if this qualification is insisted upon the Commission will not be as efficient as it ought to be. It is well known that at the present moment there is difficulty in obtaining schoolmasters with a sufficient knowledge of Gaelic to enable them to teach schools efficiently in the Highlands; and still more difficult will it be to find a gentleman of education, position, and legal training to fill the office of Commissioner. There can be no justification in inserting such a qualification, and I am afraid it will only add another obstacle to the proper working of the Bill.

MR. BEITH (Glasgow, Central): I may say that I know one or two gentlemen familiar with the Gaelic language who would be quite competent to act as Commissioners.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I trust that after the very fair manner in which the Lord Advocate has met the appeal to him the Committee will support the right hon. and learned Gentleman.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I cannot allow the statement which has been made to the Committee by two legal Gentlemen—one on this side of the House and one on the other—to pass without notice. I, for one, fail to conceive how it can be satisfactory, either in a criminal or any other trial, to have a Judge who is ignorant of the language of the people among whom he is administering justice. I certainly do not think it right to attempt to justify one abuse by suggesting that another abuse already exists, and that in the ordinary Courts of Law the Judges do not, as a rule, understand the language of the people among whom they administer justice. I am able to confirm what has been said by the hon. Member for Argyllshire (Mr. Macfarlane) with reference to the necessity of Indian officials knowing the language of the Indian Natives among whom they reside.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): I feel bound to dispute the accuracy of the statement of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell). It is an entire mistake to suppose that the officials all over India understand the language of the Natives among whom they act. In the Presidency of Bombay, for instance, there are four different vernaculars, and it would be perfectly impossible for a Judge to understand the whole of them.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I cannot answer for the Presidency of Bombay; but I think I can for the other parts of India.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment, as amended, *agreed to.*

MR. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): The Amendment which I have now to move has reference to the next paragraph of the clause, and its object is to omit the qualification that one of the Commissioners shall be an advocate of the Scottish Bar of not less than 10 years' standing, and to substitute the provision that he shall be a person "duly qualified to practise law in one of the Scotch Courts." I may mention a single instance, which I think will convince the Committee of the inadvisability of making the provision contained in the clause. Probably there was no one better versed in Scotch law and rural practice than the late M'Neil Caird, and yet if he had now been alive it would have been impossible to have appointed him to one of these Commissionerships under this clause.

Amendment proposed,

In page 7, line 13, to leave out the words "an advocate of the Scottish bar of not less than ten years' standing," and insert the words "duly qualified to practise law in one of the Scotch Courts."—(*Mr. M'Culloch.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I cannot accept the Amendment. It has been the invariable practice, in similar circumstances, to appoint a person of even considerable standing at the Bar. Under the Irish Land Act the Judicial Commissioner is required to be a person of not less than 10 years' standing at the Irish Bar. Without intending to be disrespectful to any person, I must say that we are more likely to get the proper qualification under the clause than under this Amendment.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): The Judicial Commissioner under this Bill will occupy a different position from that of the Irish Commissioner, who is not only a Commissioner of the Land Court, but a Judge of the Superior Courts as well. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate laid it down that the Judicial Commissioner should be a Lord of Session, there might be some justification for the qualification which the clause seeks to impose. But I quite agree with the hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. M'Culloch) that under this Bill there is no advantage in limiting the selection in the same manner as would be necessary if the appointment were that of Judge of one of the Superior Courts. The questions which the Land Commission will have to deal with are of a different class altogether; the scope of the investigation is limited; and there is no absolute necessity for the appointment of a barrister of 10 years' standing. There are other branches of the Legal Profession in which suitable men may be found, and the limitation proposed by the clause ought not to be retained.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I shall certainly support the Amendment. I hold that its effect will be to widen the area of choice, so as to enable the Government to select the best man. It is quite possible, if there is no restriction of this kind, that you may find a solicitor who is specially qualified to discharge the duties of the office, and who is conversant both with questions relating to land and relating to law. If you make it absolutely essential that the appointment should be conferred upon someone now practising in the Parliament House of 10 years' standing, you may find it necessary to tempt him with the offer of a very large salary indeed. Not only would a large expenditure be entailed in that way, but it would be requisite to give the other two Commissioners correspondingly high salaries. If we limit ourselves to the Parliament House, we are certainly not likely to obtain a really competent barrister of 10 years' standing who would accept the appointment unless the salary offered were a great deal higher than the necessities of the case demand; for these reasons I shall support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. M'Culloch).

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): No doubt the principle of conferring such appointments only upon barristers of 10 years' standing is one which has been long adopted in Scotland; but it is time it should cease. In this particular case I maintain that you may have competent lawyers in the Parliament House, and yet not one of them a person who ought to be selected for this appointment. So far as I understand the Amendment, it places no limitation upon the power of the Government to appoint an advocate of 10 years' standing; but it simply provides that the appointment shall not be restricted to that class only.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I hope the hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. M'Culloch) will not put the Committee to the trouble of dividing upon this point. It must not be forgotten that the Land Commission which the Bill establishes will have to perform most difficult and delicate official duties of an entirely new kind. It is, therefore, absolutely essential that the Court to be established should be so constituted as to inspire confidence in both classes of litigants. I venture to think that any Amendment we might insert in the Bill which would lower the *status* of the Commissioners, or render it probable that they would inspire very little confidence among the people, would be greatly to be deprecated. My only objection to the previous Amendment was that it might not be possible to obtain a man of adequate standing who knew Gaelic; and the fact that we have adopted that Amendment makes it all the more necessary that the remaining Members of the Commission should possess such qualifications as would place the dignity and efficiency of the new tribunal upon a solid foundation.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 183; Noes 80: Majority 103.—(Div. List, No. 77.)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

Sir DONALD CURRIE (Perthshire, W.): I beg to move in page 7, line 14, after "standing," to insert "and the other two Commissioners shall be practical agriculturists." I am of opinion that due provision having been made to secure the services of a Judicial Commissioner with a legal training, the remaining Commissioners should have some practical acquaintance with the questions likely to be brought before them.

Amendment proposed,

In page 7, line 14, after the word "standing," to insert the words "and the other two

Commissioners shall be practical agriculturists."—(*Sir Donald Currie.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I think the adoption of the Amendment of my hon. Friend would be calculated to do more harm than good. It would, in that case, be essential to restrict the appointment to men who had lived all their lives in the country, and had devoted themselves to the study of agricultural matters. The object of leaving two of the Commissioners at large, so to speak, and not defining their profession, is to leave it possible to select persons who have special knowledge of agricultural matters. A man may not be a practical agriculturist and yet know a good deal about agricultural matters. The administration of the Act will also involve a certain amount of pastoral knowledge, and that might be excluded by the adoption of the Amendment.

Amendment *negatived.*

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.) moved an Amendment in the section relating to the remuneration of the Commission and its officers, the object of which was to include valuers, assessors, clerks, and persons holding inferior situations.

Amendment proposed,

In page 7, line 23, after the word "officers," to insert the words "including valuers and assessors, as also clerks or persons holding inferior situations."

Amendment *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 16 (Area covered by the Act).

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): The first section of the clause provides that—

"The Commissioners after due inquiry shall ascertain what parishes or islands or districts forming aggregates of parishes, within the counties of Argyll, Inverness, Ross, Sutherland, Caithness, Orkney, and Shetland, are crofting parishes, or aggregates of crofting parishes, and shall determine that this Act shall apply to such parishes."

I propose, as an Amendment, to leave out the first two lines of the section, for the purpose of providing that the Bill shall be applicable to all the counties named without any preliminary inquiry by the Commissioners to ascertain what were the crofters' parishes. Unless this alteration is agreed to, a large number of the poor class of cottars in these counties will be excluded from all the advantages proposed to be conferred by the measure, and the Bill will only apply in patchwork fashion. Within my limited knowledge there is no precedent for legislation which is to apply only to portions of particular localities. If the Amendment is adopted, the Act will still only apply in circumstances to which it is applicable. The object of the clause is, I presume, to make the measure inapplicable where it could not possibly be applied, and my Amendment will answer the same purpose, because if the clause is made applicable to the whole of the counties named, it cannot be applied except in cases to which the Bill is applicable, and that is where there are crofters or crofting parishes whose cases are dealt with by the measure. Therefore, without further observation, I will move the Amendment, and I trust that the Lord Advocate will accept it.

Amendment proposed,

In page 7, line 27, to leave out from the word "The," to the word "within," in line 28, inclusive, and insert the words "This Act shall apply to,"—(*Mr. Macfarlane,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words 'The Commissioners, after due inquiry, shall ascertain what parishes or islands or districts forming aggregates of parishes within' stand part of the Clause."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I very much agree with the hon. Member as to the result of the Amendment, and believe it would amount to very much the same thing as the clause itself; but if we mean the Act to apply only to areas inhabited by persons possessing the crofter qualification, we had much better say so, and say so consistently. I hope the hon. Member will not press the Amendment.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I support the Amendment. The clause, as it stands, would have a most extraordinary effect. Without any geographical distinction it will apply to one set of tenants holding under one form of tenure, but will except another set of tenants holding under precisely the same tenure. This, I maintain, is contrary to the practice of all modern legislation, which is to assimilate the tenure throughout the country and make it uniform. Here the Bill makes exceptions in the most extraordinary manner. First of all we have exceptional counties, then exceptional parishes, and then exceptional holdings. It is an endeavour to give the benefits of the Act to the smallest number of tenants, and I am sure the result would be unsatisfactory. One tenant would hold under different conditions from another, and a third under a totally different tenure still. I think the Committee should express their opinion upon the matter, if only by way of protest, by accepting the Amendment of my hon. Friend.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I shall support the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Argyllshire (Mr. Macfarlane), although it may be objected to on the ground that it goes a little too far. No doubt, so far as the interests of the crofters are concerned in the provisions of the Bill, the Amendment would make a material alteration. If there are no crofters, however, the Bill will not apply. The definition in the clause does not apply to the crofters, but to crofting parishes, and later on a "crofting parish" is defined to mean a parish in which there have been, within 80 years prior to the passing of the Act, holdings consisting of arable land held with a right of pasturage in common with others, and in which there are still tenants of holdings from year to year. But there may be parishes in which there are hundreds of crofters to whom the definition will not apply. I have taken the trouble to look at the definition of the word "croft" in the dictionary, and I find that it means a small field or inclosure of arable land attached to a dwelling; but it is not grazing ground. I am quite sure that in many parts of Scotland these common grazing lands do not exist; and therefore I hope the Lord Advocate will accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for Argyllshire, which will enable all crofters in the counties mentioned in the clause to receive benefit under the Bill.

Dr. R. MACDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I hope that the hon. Member for Argyllshire (Mr. Macfarlane) will adhere to his Amendment. We all know that this Bill has been brought in in consequence of the extension of deer forests in the Highlands of Scotland. It was pointed out by an hon. Member, the other night, that on the borders of the large deer forests, like that of Mr. Winans, there is not a single crofter to be found. The only persons who live there are cottars who have been turned out of these forests. Indeed, it would not suit the gentlemen who own deer forests to have crofters all around them. The land, which was originally croft, has been converted into large sheep farms, and very strict precautions are taken to prevent trespassing. I cannot see why there should be any objection to the Amendment. I do not think anybody need be in the smallest degree afraid that any Land Commission which may be appointed will be likely to give the crofters too much, or will do anything that is wrong or unjust. The adoption of the Amendment will save a great deal of discussion in the future. The Government will appoint men who can be trusted to do justice between the landlords and the people, and we should give them the usual latitude in deciding what land should be included, and what not.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I hope the Committee will adopt the Amendment in the interests of the cottars who may live just outside of crofting parishes, and would constantly be debarred from any benefit under the Act. All crofting parishes in which there are crofters should come within the area of the Bill, and all cottars also, otherwise great injustice will be done. I therefore trust that the Lord Advocate will accept the Amendment.

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): This limitation of "crofting parish" is one which I am afraid will affect a great part of the counties included in the Bill. I think there ought to be no restriction whatever; but wherever there are crofters the provisions of the Bill should apply to them. I would ask those hon. Members who represent the crofters, and all Members friendly to them, to take a decided stand on this point, and I trust that the hon. Member for Argyllshire (Mr. Macfarlane) will not withdraw the Amendment.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): One of the complaints made by the crofters was that they were rack-rented; but the Royal Commission only report four instances of rack-rented estates visited by them, and they will not be affected if the Committee pass this clause, so that, under the definition contained in the Bill, certain localities where this legislation is more required than almost anywhere else in Scotland will be entirely debarred from coming in. It has been found in a great many districts that the crofters have been compelled to become leaseholders, and when once a crofter becomes a leaseholder he ceases to be a crofter under the Definition Clause, and he is deprived of the benefit of the Bill. Before the Land Commission can begin their operations at all it will be necessary for them to spend six or 12 months in trying to discover what the crofting parishes are under the definition given here. In the next place, after a great expenditure of money and time, they may arrive at a conclusion as to what are the crofting parishes, and then the other clauses of the Bill step in and operate, so that by the time the Commissioners have completed their preliminary investigation there will be no crofters at all to whom the principles of the Bill can be extended. I trust that my hon. Friend the Member for Argyllshire (Mr. Macfarlane) will divide the Committee upon his Amendment, and that his proposal will be carried, so that the Commissioners will be able to begin their work at once without having to waste eight or 12 months in finding out where the Act is to operate.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I am very unwilling to interpose in the discussion; but I think there is one consideration which it is important for the Committee to bear in mind. As the Bill is based on a certain historic view of the crofters' rights it is absolutely essential that that historic basis should be kept constantly in view. For that reason I regard it as of vital importance that the Government should adhere to the Bill as they have framed it, and confine the exceptional legislation here initiated to those classes which, in the view of the Government, have lost some of the rights which it is now desired by the Government to restore.

MR. MACFARLANE: When I moved the Amendment I did it in the fewest words possible, because I imagined that there could be no difficulty about the matter. Even the speech of the Lord Advocate led me to believe that he himself would make no difficulty. He certainly accused me of going too far; but, as my hon. Friend the Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) has pointed out, the clause of the right hon. and learned Gentleman himself goes very much too far, and would, if adopted as it stands, make a very considerable difference to the very poorest class of persons who will receive benefit under the Bill. But that is the way throughout the clauses of the Bill. A clause is inserted which professes to give some benefit to the crofters; and then there are provisoes and sub-sections which impose such restrictions and limitations that the clause becomes altogether valueless. That is the invariable rule. The right hon. and learned Gentleman has not yet answered the objection of the hon. Member for Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) that the effect of this clause will be to exclude the cottars from the benefits proposed by the Bill. Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman intend that they should be so included, and that there should be a general survey of Scotland to lay down what are the crofting parishes which are included within the scope of the Bill?

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I hope that before the discussion is closed the right hon. and learned Gentleman will answer the appeal of my hon. Friend, and explain who it is who are to be entitled to compensation under Part IV. of the Bill. He has already consented to make the definition of a crofter wider than was originally intended. There may, however, be a large number of cottars who will be entitled to compensation under the Bill; and it is not contended that they are provided for. As to the historical question, if we are to confine the Bill to the crofters with grazing land and common rights of pasturage, very few persons would be benefited by it. But arable land has now been admitted, and some portion of the cottars are to be benefited; and I wish to know whether the Lord Advocate proposes to exclude from the benefit of this clause those persons who are entitled to compensation under Part IV. of the Bill, and what are to become of crofters who do not happen to belong to crofting parishes?

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I hope the Committee will not be prepared to enter into matters of this kind which have already been fully discussed, seeing that it is most desirable to get through with the Bill. There is certainly no intention in the Bill to give the kind of benefits proposed to every cottager throughout Scotland generally, or to every cottager in particular counties; but when it has been ascertained that the parish is a crofting parish upon the historical basis, then we assume that many of those who are found in those areas may at one time have had a connection with the soil and been deprived of their crofts. It is, therefore, proposed to extend the benefits of the Act to such persons, and thus go beyond the persons who now answer the description of crofters; but certainly there is no intention of giving these benefits to every cottager throughout the Lowlands, irrespective altogether of his historical connection with the soil.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 152; Noes 95: Majority 37.—(Div. List, No. 78.)

Mr. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I have an Amendment on the Paper to strike out from the clause the names of the counties in which the crofting parishes are situate; but as the Government have already intimated that the Bill is not be extended beyond the districts which have been reported on by the Royal Commission, I do not propose to move it.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I move to insert, after "Argyll," the words "Bute and Arran." The object of the Amendment is to include the Islands of Bute and Arran among the crofting parishes which are to come within the provisions of the Bill. Bute and Arran contain numerous crofting parishes, and everything that applies to a Highland county will apply to both of those Islands. The great bulk of the crofters there hold the land they occupy under the Duke of Hamilton. They are all them tenants at will, and although the deer come down and eat up their crops, if they make any objection they are turned out. All the evils which exist in the Highlands, and which it is the main object of this Bill to remedy, are to be found in the Island of Arran, and fully entitle it to be included within the scope of the Bill. The crofters there complain loudly of their condition, and their grievances are as fully deserving of redress as those of the crofters in any other locality.

Amendment proposed, in page 7, line 29, after the word "Argyll," to insert the words "Bute and Arran."—(*Dr. Clark.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): My hon. Friend (Mr. M'Culloch) rightly understood and stated the view of the Government on this matter. The Bill was brought in on the information contained in the Report of the Royal Commission. We have no authentic knowledge—indeed, no knowledge whatever—on which we should be justified in submitting proposals to Parliament with respect to any other localities; and, in these circumstances, I should not feel warranted in asking Parliament to extend the area of this Bill to places not visited by the Royal Commission, and upon which the Commissioners have not reported. The scope of the Commissioners' inquiry was general, and not limited to the Highlands. Their first duty was to inform themselves of the parts of the country which seemed to demand their investigation, and to report upon them. I think we are bound to assume that the Commissioners executed that duty, and made their Report in regard to those places the peculiar social and economic conditions of which justify this legislation. Therefore, I cannot accept this Amendment, and in regard to it and others I am bound to stand by the Bill as limited.

Mr. BEITH (Glasgow, Central): In one part of the Island of Arran the crofters for miles round have been deprived of the right of pasture, and many cases of unjustifiable eviction have taken place from 1820 down to as late as 1883. I could name to the Lord Advocate six distinct glens in this beautiful Island from which the crofters have been evicted during that period; and I am informed that since 1880 the hill pasture has been taken away from the crofters residing in 10 distinct localities in the Island of Arran. If it were not for the situation and attractiveness of the Island, and its nearness to Glasgow, the population would be very badly off indeed. As has been said by my hon. Friend, all the tenants are tenants at will or on one year's lease, and they are in a condition of subjection to the landlord as bad as that of any people in any part of Scotland. If there are any districts outside the counties named in the clause to which the provisions of the Bill ought to be extended, the Island of Arran is certainly one of them. I have had one case placed before me, that of a cottar, who last year laid out £40 upon his little cottage. Hitherto he has been able to let his cottage every season; but he has just received notice to quit, and his outlay of last year, and of previous years, will be all lost to him. In my opinion, it is exceedingly desirable that this Island should be included within the scope of the Bill. The tenants are exactly in the condition of the crofters in the Highlands, for whose relief this Bill is intended; and it is of the utmost importance, in their interests, that the Island should be included.

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): This question exclusively affects the Islands of Bute and Arran. As representing the constituency of those Islands, I think it right to state why I intend, in the interest of the people there, most strenuously to oppose this proposal. I do so with some confidence, because at every meeting I addressed during the election I discussed this subject, and I placed before the electors unequivocally the course I intended to take if ever this disastrous proposal were introduced as applicable to the Island of Arran. Perhaps I may be allowed to point out to the Committee some circumstances which appear to me to be conclusive against the reasonableness of the proposals of the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark). In the first place, I attach great importance to the fact which the Lord Advocate has already communicated to the Committee—namely, that the Royal Commission did not visit Arran. It was in their power, but nevertheless they abstained from doing so. Anyone who is acquainted with the beauty and attractiveness of the Island of Arran will know that it is a most charming place, and will readily admit that not only was this an act of self-denial on their part, but that the fact of the Royal Commissioners not having stopped their yacht there on their way round the Coast of Scotland affords conclusive evidence that in the opinion of the Commissioners the condition of the people of the Island of Arran was not such as to justify their inclusion in the present Bill. But, beyond that, there is another consideration to which I will ask the attention of the Committee. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman, in making this proposal, would have pointed out the evils that were to be remedied, and that he would not have been content to rest his proposition upon general assertions or even an individual case. This Bill is intended as a remedy for districts where the life of the people is a failure, and where they have no means of obtaining subsistence. So far, however, as the people of Arran are concerned, life, instead of being a failure, is a very great success with them. They are a set of able, capable, cheerful, prosperous people; and it is in their interests that I protest against this proposal, because it assimilates their fortunes with the fortunes of those who, however estimable their qualities may be, have not made those qualities prevail in the battle of life. The evils which the Bill proposes to remedy will be found to be the following:—In the first place, that the holdings of the crofters are miserably small—so small that no man can make a livelihood out of them; next, that there are frequent evictions; thirdly, that too high a rent is exacted; and, lastly, that they are without communication with the rest of the world. These were the grievances which the Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into, and from every one of them the Island of Arran is perfectly free. I should like to give some figures, which to my mind are not only instructive but will enable the Committee to get at the root of this question. I am sure that hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the Committee will admit that the first of the grievances which I have enumerated—namely, the miserable smallness of the holdings—was the principal feature of that inquiry of the Commissioners; and the best illustration I can give is the statistical account which the Commissioners give of the four parishes, as typical and characteristic of the evils they desired to remedy. According to the Report of the Royal Commission, taking the holdings under £30 rent, 85 per cent had a less rental than £6. I have obtained information of the holdings this year in the Island of Arran of a corresponding class—namely, under £30 rent—and I find that instead of 85 per cent there are only 9 per cent under £6. It is further said that in the crofting districts in the Island of Arran there is a miserable monotony of small holdings. That is not the case in Arran. There are a variety of holdings ranging from £6 a-year to a much higher figure. Is it the case that they are condemned to live where there is no other occupation? That also is distinctly not the fact; and I may tell the Committee that one of the main occupations of a large and most respectable portion of my constituents in Arran is that of letting lodgings to visitors during the summer. Therefore, instead of being destitute of any occupation except that of agriculture, they have a very agreeable and lucrative occupation during the summer months. I believe also, and it does them great credit, that they are prosperous. Another point bearing upon this question is this—that under one of the provisions of the 1st clause of the Bill a crofter is precluded from subletting his holding, and from taking benefit under it. I believe that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate is under a promise to bring up a clause to deal with this matter of sub-letting; but if it is to apply to Arran, the result would be that many of these persons who give up possession of their houses for several months in the year would receive no benefit under the Bill. But, whether it applies or not, one of the chief features of distinction between the case of the people of Arran and of the crofters in the Highlands is that the former have another occupation and another source of livelihood. Then, again, there is a considerable amount of fishing, and a good deal is now being done to further the interests of the fishermen. A pier has already been put up, and a harbour will probably be soon established in Loch Ranza. Therefore, there are not among this community the privations and the absence of the opportunity for self-elevation which exist in the districts to which the Bill more properly applies. I am not going to weary the Committee by entering into an altercation with the hon. Gentleman the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) as to a question of facts. I have in my recollection an incident which occurred a short time ago in reference to a statement of the hon. Gentleman. The hon. Gentleman asserted that a particular individual paid £80 rent. I stated that he had never paid more than £33; but the hon. Member declined to accept my correction. In this case the hon. Member made a reference to the Duke of Hamilton. It is right to say that the community of Arran is attached to the Duke of Hamilton, who is the proprietor, by more than a mere commercial tie. The Dukes of Hamilton have been the Chiefs of the people of the Island for generations, and every man in the Island, unless he is trying to conciliate the momentary favour of a Glasgow Radical, would say that he regards the Duke of Hamilton with feelings of personal regard and friendship. I am bound to say that I do not think it is very creditable to certain politicians that they have tried their clumsy artifices on a population enjoying prosperity in attempting to stir up discontent where there is no ground for discontent. The last point I would mention as one of the objects of the investigation of the Royal Commission is the want of communication with the outer world. Fortunately, in the case of the Island of Arran there is constant steam communication, and the people of the Island see a great deal of the outer world. Their sons go out to Glasgow and elsewhere for employment, and do credit to the district to which they belong. Consequently, on that point as well, there is no similarity between the condition of the population of Arran and that of the crofters in the Highlands of Scotland. The result of applying this Bill to Arran would be most detrimental to the welfare of the community. My theory about Arran is that the Island should be for the Arran people—that the Arran people should live and thrive there. It is always said, "Arran for the Arran people;" and I oppose this Amendment, because it seems to me that to extend this Bill to Arran might lead to a gradual depletion of the population, carrying the Arran people away and substituting strangers in their place. One of the most important features of this Bill is the provision for the fixing of judicial rents. I challenge contra-

diction from anyone who has the slightest knowledge of the subject when I say that if you send down a Judicial Commission to consider what rents ought to be paid in Arran, the result would be to bring about a general raising of rents. The reason for that is this. The land of Arran is valuable, not merely for small farms, but from the attractiveness of the beautiful scenery and other characteristics it is valuable also for residences; and if this Bill is to apply to Arran, and the system of fixing judicial rents is to be adopted, it would be the duty of the Commissioners to ascertain how much a place would let for, not in view of its being a holding, but as a lodging-house, and the result would be that they would screw up these unfortunate people, who are now enjoying a moderate rent, to what would practically be a watering-place rent. Another point to which I attach special weight is this. I have said that the relations of the people and the principal proprietor of the Island are of the most harmonious character. I do not say that that is the result of special indulgence on his part. I maintain that the qualities of the people demand and deserve the treatment they receive. I would, however, ask the Committee to consider this view of the case. Suppose you in this Bill introduce the Land Commission between the people and the proprietor, and that this should have the effect of taking away the interest which the proprietor at present takes in the administration of his own estate, would the people hereafter get the same terms they get now? Would they not, under the 1st clause of the Bill, be placed in a much worse position than that which they now occupy? I am afraid that the proprietor of the Island, being deprived of his interest in the property, would be open to the temptation of putting up a villa here and a lodging-house there all over the place, and in the end the present tenants would be deprived of the advantage they now enjoy—namely, the monopoly of letting lodgings. That would, I am afraid, be the result of adopting this Amendment, and it is a result which, in the interests of these people, I should deeply deplore. I think it is only right to add that I have spoken now to the Committee in precisely the same way as I did when before my constituents at the last election. And I speak also with a thorough knowledge of the place, having visited nearly every house in Arran. It is quite true that the people of Arran are Highlanders, and, of course, to that extent they have a distant connection with the suffering people who are the objects of this legislation. It is a natural ambition for people who are a little out-of-elbows themselves to endeavour to walk down the street alongside their better-off neighbours, and assume a distant relationship. I am prepared to do anything for those who have been less prosperous than their brethren in the Island of Arran; but I think it is a stretch of friendship to ask the people of Arran to place themselves under the provisions of this Bill. The hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. Beith) made some remarks in the early part of the discussion, and I am bound to say that I was very much surprised at the statements he made. My belief is that the effect of adopting this proposal would be to disestablish the crofters in the Island of Arran altogether, and in reality to hand over their places to others. Of course, I know very well that the hon. Gentleman thinks that the best thing you can do to any body of men is to disestablish and disendow them; and I am somewhat inclined to believe that he is desirous of applying his favourite theory to my constituents. I trust that the question will be considered by the Committee entirely in the interests of the people of Arran, and that they will decline to back up the random statements of hon. Gentleman below the Gangway on the other side of the House—statements which, in my opinion, are met and confuted by the marked abstention of the Royal Commission from visiting the Island of Arran, even for the purpose of inquiry—an evident proof that they knew the Island required none of the remedies provided by the present Bill. The introduction of this system may be appropriate to some places, but it is not required in the Island of Arran. Its application there would simply be to throw a dark cloud over the modest prosperity at present enjoyed by the people, and which is largely due to their own virtues.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I am sorry to hear from the hon. and learned Member for Buteshire (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson), that his constituents are not prepared to march through Coventry with the rest of the population of the Highlands. Am I to understand from the Lord Advocate that the Bill will only be applicable to the places visited by the Royal Commission?

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: If I said "places," I meant counties.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): If the places visited by the Royal Commission were to be made the criterion of the extent of the operation of the Bill, we should probably have to include Glasgow and Edinburgh, as those places were visited by the Commissioners, as well as a number of other large towns, and evidence was read in relation to some of the outlying districts in the Highlands. Possibly, the fact that the Commissioners were wrecked in the gunboat placed at their disposal by the Government accounts for their not visiting Arran, and to the absence of any confirmation from that Island of the facts adduced in evidence elsewhere. It is to be regretted that the Commissioners did not visit a place which we have heard so temptingly described by the hon. and learned Gentleman. The Commissioners are to be instructed to decide what are to be crofting parishes. The Royal Commissioners did not visit Arran, and consequently there is no official Report about that Island, and I apprehend that if the Bill passes, in its present form, it will be the duty of the Land Commission appointed under it to decide whether any and what parts of the country are crofting parishes, and whether Arran is properly to be considered a crofting island or parish. It seems to me that the clause which we decided a short time ago, in the shape in which it now stands, affects this matter. As the hon. and learned Gentleman has pointed out, the houses in the Island of Arran are, as a matter of fact, sub-let during some portion of the year, and the people of the Island do something for themselves during the summer which would prevent them from coming within the scope of this Bill. But I wish to point out, that as we make it the duty of the Commissioners to decide what is a crofting and what is not a crofting district, there is no necessity for restricting unnecessarily the operation of the Bill by refusing to include in it what are properly Highland counties.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I would suggest to my hon. Friend the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) that he should add to his proposal an Amendment which stands in my name lower down—namely, to include the counties of "Nairn, Moray, Banff, Aberdeen, Kincardine, Forfar, and Perth." It would be unadvisable, I think, to take more than one division as to which of the Highland counties are to be included. I would therefore ask my hon. Friend to amend his Amendment, by adding after Bute and Arran all the counties which are really Highland counties. I do not see any reason why there should be any limitation. They are all Highland counties, and the conditions of the crofters in them are very much the same as in the area to which the Bill at present applies. If their grievances are not so apparent, it is owing to the fact that they are endowed with greater patience than their brethren of the Western Highlands. Now, I think it is a most unfortunate principle for Parliament to go upon, that they will consider only the case of those who have made themselves troublesome, and who have been riotous and disorderly, and that while people remain quiet and orderly they will do nothing for them. It is a stimulus and encouragement to the crofters of other parts of the country who have borne their grievances quietly to follow the example of their more turbulent brethren. I will therefore propose to amend the Amendment by adding, after "Bute and Arran," the words "Nairn, Moray, Banff, Aberdeen, Kincardine, Forfar, and Perth."

Amendment proposed to proposed Amendment, by adding, after the word "Arran," the words "Nairn, Moray, Banff, Aberdeen, Kincardine, Forfar, and Perth."—(*Mr. J. W. Barclay.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I have no objection to accept the Amendment suggested by my hon. Friend, and there would then be only one division as to all the Highland counties which are proposed to be included. But I wish to say a word or two by way of reply to the observations of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Buteshire (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson). In the first place, the Royal Commission merely went to the places they were asked to visit, and they were the worst districts in the Highlands. They could not, in the time they had at their disposal, visit the Islands in the South-West, because they started at Skye, and by the time they got to Lewis they had lost their gunboat. For this reason they held meetings in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and at the latter place they received information as to Islay and Mull and other Islands. If the argument for the exclusion of Arran holds good, it would apply equally to Islay and other Islands as large. As to the condition of Arran, I do not agree with the rose-coloured picture the hon. and learned Member has drawn to day. I know Arran quite as well as the hon. and learned Gentleman, and my view is very different from that which he has presented. It is somewhat curious how very inaccurate the hon. and learned Gentleman is in regard to his facts. When the hon. Member for Lanarkshire raised this question some time ago I corrected the hon. and learned Gentleman, and I feel called upon to do so again. In regard to the case of the crofter whose rent was sought to be raised on his making a building improvement, what I said was that the rent was raised to £80; but that sum was never paid, because my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow raised the question, and the landlord at once offered to reduce it. He proposed £40, and it now stands at £33. We have been told about the relations of the Duke of Hamilton with his tenants in the Island of Arran. I will remind the hon. and learned Member that for 15 years prior to 1880 the estate was managed by a trustee, and not by the Duke. During this time a small crofter, who had a croft of 18 acres, pulled down a black house and built a white one, and at the end of a short lease he had his rent raised from £18 to £33, and that was not for anything done by the Duke. There was not one acre added to the farm, and the increased rent was simply attempted to be put on because the tenant had pulled down a black house and erected a white one. The property thus built was sought to be stolen or legally confiscated by his Grace, who is a Prince, and holds two or three Dukedoms. It was an immoral act, and if the Duke had got what he ought to get he would have been imprisoned for stealing. By-and-bye I hope to see the law applied to Dukes as well as to pickpockets. If the Committee refuse to put the tenants of the Duke of Hamilton into this Bill, all the crofters there may share the fate of this poor man, and if they do anything to their farms they may have their property confiscated. I have no objection to the course the Lord Advocate is taking in refusing Amendments, because the result will be that in the next Parliament there will be more extreme men than now appear. We, the moderate men, will give way to the extreme men, and, instead of us, you will have men representing the Land Restoration League in Scotland, who now come to our meetings and fight against us, as we are fighting the landlords. I congratulate the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate upon the part he is taking in playing into the hands of the Land Restoration League. By-and-bye the right hon. and learned Gentleman will find that he has a very different class of men to deal with than the moderate men who now represent the Highland crofters. We are told there is to be a pier at Loch Ranza, but that pier at Loch Ranza will not give the poor fishermen milk for their children. When we are passing a measure which is to give practical perpetuity of tenure to the crofter, and prevent his landlord from disestablishing him, are we to be told that it is either just or equitable to exclude from it the Island of Arran? The Duke of Hamilton holds the whole of that Island and uses it for sport, having the crofters entirely at his mercy. One year the rent is raised and the next the deer come down and eat all the corn. What is the use of passing a Hares and Rabbits Act when, as long as these men are tenants at will, the moment they complain they are turned out? The condition of the crofters in the Island of Arran is exactly that of the crofters in those parts of the Highlands to which the Bill applies. I quite agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) that the Bill should apply to all Highland counties equally, and we could, by adopting the suggestion of my hon. Friend, settle the question of their inclusion by one division. In order to secure that object, I shall be glad to withdraw my Amendment in favour of his.

SIR DONALD CURRIE (Perthshire, W.): I understand that the Amendment which I have on the Paper for including the county of Perth will be virtually set aside by a decision upon the proposal of the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay), who desires to add words that will include the counties of Nairn, Moray, Banff, Aberdeen, Kincardine, and Forfar, as well as Perth. If that Amendment be rejected by the Committee, I shall be debarred from moving the addition of Perth to the Bill; and I will, therefore, venture to place before the Committee as briefly as I can, upon the present Amendment, the reasons which induce me to desire to bring Perth within the scope of the measure. In regard to Arran, I resided there for several years, and I do not know that there are many places in the Highlands which claim more consideration than Arran. I have known crofters there who have had their crofts damaged by the depredations of deer; and I have also seen their crops damaged by game, both ground and winged. With regard to Perthshire, I may not only be debarred from moving my Amendment, but I may be told by the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson) that the Royal Commission did not visit it. Being an inland county, they could not very well get there by boat, but they could have got there by railway. It certainly appears to me that the Commission did not extend its visits to all the districts requiring examination, by reason of the approach of the latter days of August, and the desire expressed by the Government that they should terminate their labours. The Commissioners consequently stayed their investigation, and the counties of Perth and Aberdeen as well as the Island of Arran were not favoured with a visit. But the necessity was there all the same, and the grievance of the Perthshire crofters is none the less a grievance than that which is felt by the crofters of other parts of the Highlands. I have received from a factor in the county a letter in which he urges that Perthshire, at least that part of it known as the Highlands of Perthshire, should be included in the area covered by this Bill, as the position of the Perthshire crofters is, in some instances, just the same as that of other crofters. They are less demonstrative, and they are law-abiding men. A clergyman in the county has also written to me on the subject, saying that it is to him a great mystery that such a county should be excluded, and expressly mentioning that there are hundreds of crofters whose grievances call for redress. A deputation of crofters not very far from my own residence have represented to me that they are most anxious that the Bill should be extended to Perthshire, and begging me to do all that I can in their behalf. A good deal has been said about the historic basis; but if there is any part of Scotland which claims historic associations it is Perthshire. During the French War some 3,000 fencibles were raised from the districts within the district of Breadalbane. The Black Watch was embodied as a regiment at Aberfeldy. At the famous reception of Her Majesty at Taymouth Castle by the first Marquess of Breadalbane there were 1,000 of his men in uniform to receive her; and now how many of that class could be got together in that district? If it is desirable to give the benefit of this Bill to the crofters in the West Highlands, it is right to extend it to Perthshire; and I therefore press on the attention of the Committee the claim of my Amendment for the addition of Perthshire to Clause 16.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I think, that as one of the Members for the county of Aberdeen, I am entitled to claim the indulgence of the Committee; but I do not propose to detain them at any considerable length. As my hon. Friend the Member for the Western Division (Dr. Farquharson) well knows, there are more agricultural holdings in Aberdeen than in any other county in Scotland, and if there is any county which deserves the consideration of the Legislature, it is Aberdeen. Many of the tenants are very small tenants. They are extremely enterprizing, and have turned a barren desert into one of the most productive counties in the Kingdom. I desire, then, to call the attention of the Committee to the precise position in which the crofters of Aberdeen stand in regard to this matter. At the meeting of the Scotch Members, it was quite understood that all of what are called Highland counties would be included within the scope of the Bill, and that there was no object in excluding them. I do not propose to reply to the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Buteshire (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson), but I would ask him to accept the Reference to the Royal Commission as entirely applicable to the county of Aberdeen. The hon. and learned Gentleman was returned to Parliament as a Representative who had nothing to do with the Crofters' Question. I, on the other hand, was elected as a crofters' candidate, and was hard pressed to give full consideration to every question which can affect the interests of the agricultural labourers and the crofters. I hold in my hand letters from large communities in Aberdeenshire which take a deep interest in these matters, and have held public meetings in support of the crofters' claims. Representations upon the subject have come to me from communities of crofters varying in number from 35 to 100, and the Resolutions they have passed in favour of legislation have been forwarded to me. It is only right that I should direct the attention of the Committee to these facts. We have been told that we may save ourselves any trouble with regard to the Islands of Bute and Arran, and the hon. and learned Member for Buteshire has told us that the people of Arran do not want this legislation applied to them. But what are the facts in regard to the county of Aberdeen? If that county is included within the scope of the Bill, it will be necessary before the legislation can take effect that the crofters must make an application to the Land Commission, and appear before the Commission to state their case. But why should the people of Aberdeen be excluded because the people of Bute and Arran do not choose to come under the Bill? Those who are in charge of the Bill will be safeguarded in every way. I do not ask that the crofters of Aberdeen shall have all the advantages of the Bill conferred upon them. All I ask is that we should not pass an Act of Parliament which will expressly exclude them. There is no reason that I can see for so doing, except the reason which is apparent from the Benches opposite that anything that is done for the agricultural labourer, the crofter, or the tenant, should be opposed. We have a Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) on the Treasury Bench, who will vote for us, and all the Northern Members are practically in favour of including Aberdeenshire. I submit, therefore, that it would be a most reasonable concession. I have never adopted the course of railing at the landlords. I believe that many of them, considering the circumstances in which they have been placed, have acted generously and benevolently, and have studied the interests of their tenants as far as they could; but all landlords are not alike, and what we want is that those who have not displayed an equal amount of generosity should be compelled by the Legislature to follow the example of their neighbours. It is upon that ground that I claim the indulgence of the Committee; and, seeing that every interest is safeguarded by the provisions of the Bill, I do hope that there will scarcely be an hon. Member who will feel himself called upon to vote for the exclusion of these Highland counties. It ought to be very easy to convince the Committee that there can be no justification for excluding any Highland county from a right to demand at the hands of the Land Commission a consideration of its claims. That is all that we ask—namely, that Parliament should give us the right of having our case heard. In one of the letters which I have received it is stated that about 50 years ago 37 crofters took from a proprietor 20 acres of land, for which they paid 20*s.* a-year, or 1*s.* per acre. Having held the land for 10 years the rent was raised to £4 a-year, and at the end of another term of 10 years it was raised to £10 a-year. At the present moment the rent is £14, and yet during the whole of this period not 1*s.* has been spent upon it by the proprietor. Every 1*d.* for improvements has been expended by the tenants. Do these men require no consideration or thought? No injury whatever can be inflicted upon the landlord, because he already receives 14*s.* for what was originally worth 1*s.* Why, then, should nothing be done for the crofters, and upon what grounds should the Committee exclude these Northern counties from the benefits of the Bill? If they do not make out a case before the Commission their application will not be attended to, and if they cannot show that their grievances are substantial and deserve consideration they will get no redress. I am not going to hold out any threat; but I do seriously warn the Committee that, as has been said already, the agricultural classes have been long suffering in Aberdeenshire; that they have now come to this House with a de-

demand for this concession, and if Parliament consents to grant it, it will do a great deal to satisfy the wants and wishes of a most deserving class of the community.

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): As that part of Aberdeenshire which I have the honour to represent is deeply interested in this question, I feel it my duty to say a few words in support of the claim of that county to be included in the Bill. I had myself given Notice of an Amendment to this effect, and should certainly have moved it if the opportunity had offered. I think it is very unfortunate that the Lord Advocate should have proposed to exclude any county on the mere ground that the Royal Commission had not visited it in the course of its investigations. The voyage of the Commissioners was necessarily limited, owing to the accident which befel the vessel that took them out; but I do not see that it can do the Bill any harm by extending its provisions to other Highland counties which come strictly within the basis of the conditions laid down for the guidance of the Royal Commission. I maintain that the county which I represent strictly carries out all these conditions. We have heard a good deal from the other side of the House about the historical basis of the Bill, and if that is to be adhered to, surely there are few counties in Scotland with greater historical associations than Aberdeenshire. *The Aberdeen Free Press* has published a series of events which have happened in connection with the county, which show that in many districts there used formerly to be crofters, but that they have now been evicted owing to the large clearances which have been made for the sake of getting rid of small farms and holdings. In many instances the land has been reclaimed by the crofter without the slightest help from his landlord, and the position of the Aberdeenshire small tenants gives them every right to claim the benefits of the Bill. They have pasturage in common with others, and they are absolutely defenceless against evictions and other evils of that kind. I do not endorse everything that has been said against the landlords. I do not think that all landlords are desirous any more than I to look upon all tenants as angels. Very often a landlord may be tied down by a trust, or he may employ a factor, and is unable to give effect to his generous impulses. These small crofts are generally very much coveted, and like Naboth's vineyard are often liable to be swallowed up by larger and richer neighbours. They certainly ought, in my opinion, to be placed in a secure position of defence against the encroachments to which they are subjected. We have heard to-night that the people of Aberdeen are peaceable, orderly, and law-abiding. It is hard indeed that they should be told, in consequence, that before their grievances can command consideration they must adopt tactics which have only been too successful in other places. I think it would be most unfortunate to teach them that that is their only means of obtaining the redress of their grievances. We know very well how narrow the margin is which keeps these people from starvation, and we should not only be prepared to approach them in a kindly spirit, but to welcome gladly any proposal made in this House to relieve their wants. It is solely in the interests of the tenants and small farmers that I have made these remarks; and if the Lord Advocate has made up his mind not to accept this Amendment, I think it only right that the Representatives of county constituencies in Scotland which contain persons in precisely the same position as those whose case is dealt with by the Bill, should let the right hon. and learned Gentleman know what the wishes of their constituents are.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Question put, "That the words 'Bute, Arran, Nairn, Moray, Banff, Aberdeen, Kincardine, Forfar, and Perth,' be inserted after the word 'Argyll.'"

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 87; Noes 126: Majority 39.—(Div. List, No. 79.)

Mr. RAMSAY (Falkirk, &c.): The object I have principally in view in moving the Amendment in my name is to exclude from the operation of the Act the Islands of Islay, Jura, and Colonsay. No reason can be shown for including them; there has been no disputation and no complaints with regard to holdings in these Islands; there has been no resistance to the law there; I have never seen a more law-abiding population, and I have lived amongst them all my life, and can therefore speak with confidence; but I shall not dwell upon those particulars any further. The Islands I refer to are a district of the county of Argyll, and under the Roads and Bridges Act were regarded as a county in themselves. I do not think that it is at all disrespectful to the Royal Commission to state that it was never contemplated they would deal with any area which they neither examined nor visited. It has been stated that there may have been a statement with regard to the Islands; but I must say that I never heard of any such thing, and I do not believe that the Royal Commission ever took any evidence from a single owner or occupier on the Islands. Indeed, they never went near the Islands, which are within three or four hours' sail of the adjacent coast I am quite sure my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate cannot say that the Bill was framed to bring these Islands within its scope. Then I may say that there is no resident lawyer in the Islands, which shows that they are not a litigious people; there is no Sheriff there, and therefore I think there will be some difficulty in carrying out the Act there, because in every clause of it the Bill involves questions of a legal kind. I have been for 50 years living in these Islands, and know the people; and during that time I was never in a Court of Law as a suitor, and, therefore, I think my right hon. and learned Friend will see that it is rather doing an injustice to include the Islands in question within the scope of the Bill. The probability is that the Royal Commission felt that they ought not to go to places which they considered it was unnecessary to visit. But they might well have done so. In the Northern Islands one-fourth of the total population is almost dependent on charity for their subsistence. I saw a report in *The Times* that a house was destroyed a few days since by some crofters in the Lews; but in these Islands we have had nothing of that kind. The people are not to be supposed to be absolutely contented with the position in which they are placed, but they are paying their rents regularly. I therefore do not think that this Act will do good for a single poor man in the Hebrides, although it may do good for some of the richer men, by giving them fixity of tenure and fair rent; and I say that I have not had a single complaint from any one of my small occupiers, nor do I believe that in any of the Islands a single complaint has been made. I hope my right hon. and learned Friend will assent to the Amendment which I now beg to move—

Amendment proposed,

In page 7, line 32, after the word "parishes," to insert the words "but this Act shall not apply to any island which was neither visited or examined by the Crofter Commission."—(*Mr. Ramsay.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): We cannot accept the Amendment of the hon. Member. I am not aware exactly what the number of the Western Islands is; but I know it is considerable, and there were some, of course, which the Royal Commission not only did not, but could not, visit. They took the counties by sample and did not visit the whole. So that the fact that an Island was not visited by the Commissioners does not show that it should be excluded from the scope of the Bill. Then my hon. Friend said that the steamer passed very near his Island without landing. I suppose it must have done the same with regard to all the Islands on the West Coast where they did not land; but that is no reason for omitting the Islands in question from the Bill. I contend that there must be a certain arbitrariness in the localities to which a measure of this kind applies. I may be permitted to remark that if the prosperity of these Islands is such as my hon. Friend has represented, we need not have any fear that judicial rent will be fixed, because the people will not apply for it.

MR. RAMSAY: I feel the truth of what my right hon. and learned Friend says; but I point out that the Royal Commission did visit every other Island in the Hebrides to which their Report applies; and their Report does not apply to those Islands which I have mentioned, nor to certain others. My right hon. and learned Friend says he cannot assent to this Amendment, but I think it is nothing but just that he should do so. I do not see that this Bill is likely to benefit a single poor man in the Hebrides, although, as I have said, it may do some good for the richer class.

Dr. R. MACDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I am under the necessity of saying that I have not heard the speech of the hon. Member for the Falkirk Burghs (Mr. Ramsay); but, looking at the Amendment as it stands upon the Paper, I point out, what I presume is, the fault of the printer—namely, that its grammatical construction is not correct. I wish to let the Committee understand what is the meaning of this Amendment. It is that the hon. Gentleman is unblushingly drawing himself out of this Act. But in the first place I ought to apologize to the hon. Gentleman for what I stated in this House the other night. My statement was made on the word of a man who knew the parish, and I am sorry that I had no other *data* to go upon. But we shall see from the Report of the Royal Commission what is the condition of the place. It says—

"If you look at the population tables from 1831 to 1881 you will not find that the parish of Kildalton and Oa keeps up its population which it had in 1851; but as soon as Mr. Ramsay became proprietor and founded a residence for himself at the head of Loch a Chnoic, we see the same rule applied which Webster and the trustees applied so successfully to the rest of the Island, and in a few years after his succession the population falls off from 3,310 to 2,283, more than 1,000 disappearing from the Returns. But these figures do not tell the story in full. In the division of the estate called Oa, and which is outside entirely of the wretched village of Port Ellen, there are only 15 farmers and 23 cottars, where there used to be 99 farmers and 66 cottars; 38 families where there were 163. Angus M'Cuaig, blacksmith at Gleann a Mhuiluin, told me that in one of the little townships he shod 36 horses where he now shoes four, and not merely this land is not inhabited, but there is a covering of rushes on it which renders it incapable of supporting the stock which should be available for the feeding of the people elsewhere. It is not tilled, and the grazing as elsewhere has become too bad for sheep and cattle, and the chief use I saw it put to was yielding rushes with which to thatch the corn stacks of Cornabus and Lag a Mhuiluin; and let me not forget to state that so far from the land set free, and at the disposal of Mr. Ramsay, being bestowed to enlarge the crofts or farms said to be too small, the whole of the 82 holdings have gone to augment the previously existing large farms of Cornabus, Kinabus, and Kintrea, and to form another large one. So that even so intelligent a man as Mr. Ramsay is not to be trusted to make the best use of his possessions. Those three farms were large enough previously, and two of them occupied by two of that class of gentlemen farmers who were related to some of the leading families of the county."

Well, Sir, this evidence was given before the Commission, in reference to this Island and the district, especially which is owned by the hon. Member. I wish to read another statement contained in a letter from Mr. Donald Ross, Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools, which will show what was the educational condition of the Island on the 4th of August, 1875. The Report addressed to the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education is as follows:—

"Sir,—I beg to call your special attention to the very unsatisfactory state of this school. At least three of the other inspected schools in this parish are barely efficient. In my Report last year on Port Ellen public school, I referred to the unhealthy character of the building and the locality; but though the speedy removal of the children to a healthier spot was urgently needed, no action of a serious or hopeful nature has been taken. There is a grave responsibility attached to this delay, for, as was inevitable, fevers of a very bad type and other epidemics have swept away a number of the children during the year, and paralyzed the efficiency of the school. Thus, in opening the log-book at random, I find that deaths occurred from fever on the 5th, 6th, and 9th of November, and on the 7th and 8th of December. A panic seized the school, for on the 12th and 13th of November there were only three pupils present, and the number of the teachers was three. Afterwards the school was removed to a healthier spot—namely, the Free Church behind the village; but on the day of inspection it was back in its old quarters. Some of the children were absent through illness, and the assistant master was just recovering. In a school with three male teachers, a head master of remarkably high character, popular, and esteemed in the place, an assistant, and a pupil teacher, only 25 children could be present for individual examination. The cause of all this is a very complex one:—1. The building, which is very bad. 2. A locality which is very unhealthy. 3. The village of Port Ellen. This village is not supplied with water, unless the little which the natives bring more than a-quarter of a mile in pitchers be a supply. It is badly drained if it is drained at all. It has all the ordinary marks of poverty and neglect, and others peculiarly its own. Disease perpetually nestling in its filth will impair the efficiency of the new schools, as it has impaired for several years that of the old. I am unfortunately very familiar with schools crippled with gross neglect on the part of the local sanitary authorities, and I am not sure that there is an authority of the kind here; but this is the worst case in most respects known to me. It is no pleasure to me to inspect such a school as this, far less to write such a Report as this.

Donald Ross."

Here, then, we have two independent Reports as to the state of this favoured Island, to which we are told it is not necessary to apply this Bill. The hon. Member for Falkirk tells us that there is no litigation, no Sheriff, and no lawyer there. Well, then, it must be blest indeed. But I have authority for stating that all the crofters who have been evicted from the estate of the hon. Member previously signed a paper stating that they would consent to eviction without going through the ordinary course, and that they did so without knowing what was its effect. I am sorry to occupy the attention of the Committee with these matters. But the hon. Member has himself to thank, for if he had not brought forward such a proposal as is now before us, we should not have shown the nakedness of his estate.

Mr. RAMSAY: Perhaps I may be allowed to make some explanation after the serious charges which the hon. Gentleman has brought against me on this and previous occasions. The hon. Gentleman has said he was mistaken in the statements which he made the other night. I suppose he refers to the charge made against me of having burned some widow woman to death. [Dr. R. Macdonald: I apologized for that.] Yes; and I think if the hon. Member knew the truth, he would have great reason to apologize for the other charges he has made against me to-night. As to the school reported on by Mr. Ross, it was a school paid for by myself, and not a public school in any other sense than that it was a denominational school. Two of the schools in the parish at the date referred to were built at my own expense; and I do not think it could be held that it was neglect of the cause of education on my part that constituted any justification for the Report. The state of things which the Inspector referred to was brought under the notice of the Department in London by myself; and at the time I complained of his mode of inspecting the school, the remarks he made about myself, and his efforts to stimulate the people to discontent. But I do not wish to say anything about him now, because the man has been in his grave many years; and I repeat that these were things brought up at too distant date for me to have anything to do with them at the present time. As to the condition of the village, the houses are not my property, they chiefly belong to the people themselves, and the charge with regard to the sanitary arrangements is a charge against the people of Port Ellen, and not against me. I do not know that any owner of the soil would be to blame for the state of the houses in which the people live; and, moreover, many of the people have not paid me ground rent for a long time past. The sanitary arrangements, so far as they exist, were made at my expense; and I recollect, shortly after buying the property, going over the houses in the lowest part of the village, and ordering drains to be made, and perforated stones to be placed at the door of each house for the purpose of getting rid of the refuse, and enabling the people to keep their houses more tidy and clean than they were when I saw them. I did that, as I have said, at my own expense. The hon. Gentleman speaks very much about things which have not been done; but I must say that I have taken an interest not only in the condition of the people on my estate, which it was natural that I should do, but I have also done what I could to advance the interests of the locality. Notwithstanding all the defects pointed to by the hon. Member, I spent large sums of money on the works to which reference has been made; and when I bought the property, there was no road along the seashore, but I have since made one. Well, Sir, I might say more about myself; but I do not like to have personal matters discussed in this House. The time of the House is too valuable for that, and I willingly leave the charges as to burning the widow woman and evicting 400 crofters to be verified by the experience of those who choose to visit the Island and inquire as to the nature of those fictions narrated against me by the hon. Member.

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I rise merely for the purpose of suggesting to my hon. Friend the Member for the Falkirk Burghs that he would do well by withdrawing this Amendment.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I also venture to express a hope that the hon. Member will not press his Amendment. It is quite clear that by the very framework of the Bill some injustice must be done. Everyone who has listened to the discussion will admit that the hon. Member is a good landlord; but he is not the only good landlord who is affected by the Bill. No doubt, if they could, the Government would be only too ready to exclude him; but they are probably doing what they are obliged to do, and therefore I trust the hon. Member will withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): I rise to propose the omission of the last paragraph of this clause. The objectionable part of the clause is the words which relate to tenants of holdings "at the passing of this Act," because the effect of these words is that the operation of the Bill is confined to persons who are at the passing of the Act tenants of holdings. The hon. Member for Edinburgh argued against freedom of sale, on the ground that it would involve great hardship on future tenants; but it turned out that the Bill does not apply to future tenancies at all. We were very much surprised on looking at the Bill to find that the operation of the Act would be limited to those who were tenants at the passing of the Act. Take the case of a man who becomes a crofter the day before the passing of the Act. What are the rights which this Bill confers upon him? In the first place, it confers upon him the right that he cannot be evicted for any arbitrary reason by his landlord, but only for just cause as set forth in the Bill. Another right is that he can apply to the Land Commission to fix a fair rent, which is clearly defined as rent that does not include the value of the tenant's improvements. He is therefore protected with regard to the value of his own property. Thirdly, under certain conditions he may happily acquire additional land. Now, Sir, I ask why a person who becomes a crofter two days later—that is to say, the day after the Bill is passed—should not have security of tenure, protection against being rented on his own improvements, and an opportunity of obtaining more land? I should like to hear from the Lord Advocate any just distinction that can be drawn between the two cases. It appears to me that if the tenant who becomes a holder two days before the passing of the Act is to have these rights, there is no just reason why they should not be conferred on the man who becomes a tenant a day or two afterwards. The latter is under the same conditions as the former; he is open to the same danger of having his property appropriated by the landlord, stands in equal need of fixity of tenure, and may equally require more land. The only protection that the man has who becomes a crofter after the passing of the Act is the protection under the Agricultural Holdings Act (Scotland), and what protection that is the Committee may understand from a single instance. In one case a small tenant sued for improvements under the Agricultural Holdings Act; he claimed £8, was allowed £6, and the costs amounted to £48. But I should like to know what is the difference in principle which gives the security I have mentioned to one man and denies it to another who enters upon precisely the same position a day or two afterwards? If the security is a good thing for the one it is a good thing for the other. What mysterious agency, then, changes its character and makes it a bad thing for the man who becomes a crofter after the passing of the Act? I have been trying my ingenuity to discover what possible reason the Government can have for making this distinction in time and circumstances. But the secret, I think, is not far to find—the Bill is merely a sop to Cerberus. If we study the structure of the Bill we shall find it is a measure, the operation of which is strictly, rigorously, and religiously confined to the area of disorder and disturbance. In parts visited by Her Majesty's Marines, where there has been threatening of landlords, deforcement of Sheriffs' officers, and where the rents have been withheld, there the beneficence of the Government is felt, but in no other part of Scotland. Throughout these discussions the Lord Advocate has rejected all the Amendments supported by the unanimous opinion of the North of Scotland. Out of 16 Members representing constituencies North of Forfar the Government throughout seven days' discussion have only been able to carry into the Lobby with them four Members. I do not take all the divisions, but I take what are fair and typical divisions, and I find that in three cases the Government have been able to get four Members, in three cases two Members, and in two cases none. I maintain that the opinion of the North of Scotland is entirely opposed to the course the Lord Advocate is taking; and I say it would have been wiser of the right hon. and learned Gentleman if he had not despised public opinion in the North of Scotland. Why is it that we have now reached the seventh day of this discussion?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I rise to Order, Mr. Courtney. I should like to know if the hon. Gentleman is confining himself to the Amendment before the Committee?

The CHAIRMAN: I am afraid the hon. Member is travelling rather wide of the Amendment.

Mr. HUNTER: I should be wanting in my duty to the Lord Advocate if I were not to warn him of the consequences of rejecting this Amendment. There is a limit to the forbearance of the most devoted followers, and that limit is being rapidly reached on this occasion. Before I sit down I wish to seriously ask those independent Members of the Liberal Party who have allowed themselves to be led into the Lobby with the Tories and the Government to pause and consider whether they also are to take a part in opposition to the opinion of the entire North of Scotland. I maintain there is no element in this question which ought to be considered more than the opinion of the North of Scotland. That opinion is entirely against the Lord Advocate, and simply because he has framed his Bill on the narrowest possible lines. By restrictions and qualifications he has rendered nugatory those parts of the Bill which might be of use and benefit to the crofters.

Amendment proposed, in page 8, line 1, to leave out from the word "within," to the word "lease," in line 4.—(*Mr. Hunter.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'within the parishes to which this Act is determined to apply as aforesaid,' stand part of the Clause."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): There is a good deal that the hon. Member has said that I think I may perfectly well leave to the judgment of the Committee. I do not know that I can say much, or anything at all, about it. But as regards the real merits of this matter I should like to make a few remarks. In the first place, with respect to this provision in the Bill. I do not very well understand how it should have required anything in the nature of a discovery for an hon. Gentleman, who himself is a skilled lawyer, to find out at a late stage what the scope of the application of this provision is, because both in the Bill of last year and in this Bill it has been declared to apply to crofters who were tenants of holdings at the passing of this Act, and to their heirs. That is very distinct, and, of course, shows that it does not apply to contracts made after the passing of the Act, for a reason which, whether good or bad, presented itself to the Government, and also, I think, to the judgment of the House. The reason why the definition both in last year's Bill and of this year's Bill is of such a character is that no other definition would be consistent either with the theory of the Bill, or with what we regard as the justification of the Bill. If it had been intended to introduce a provision to declare that everyone who either was at the time of this Act passing, or who afterwards became a tenant of land in Scotland, should acquire fixity of tenure, the right to fair rent and the right to an enlargement of his holding, that would have been intelligible. That is not a provision of our Bill. That would have been a much larger proposal than we make. We desire to recognize in a generous spirit what is not a strict historical title, but what we believe to be a certain historical usage. We are prepared to say that those who are in the position of crofters shall get all these benefits; and not only so, but that all those who are the heirs of crofters should get all the benefits of the Bill. I may here say that I propose to move an Amendment, the object of which is to extend the definition of heirs so as to include heirs by bequest. Anyone who knows anything of the Highlands will be aware that that is a remarkable and comprehensive definition. The extent of Highland families, of Highland cousinship, is proverbial; and, therefore, I think my proposal will take in everybody who has any sort of historical connection with a place. Now, just observe what the proposal of the hon. Member (Mr. Hunter) means. It is not quite correct to say it will not apply to future holders; his extension must be intended to cover the case where strangers take holdings. Let us see what that amounts to. What would be the consequence if it were proposed that anyone, whether crofter or otherwise, who took a holding after the passing of the Act, and who, by a fresh contract held from year to year, should come under the operation of the Bill? It would be this — a person contracts with the landlord that he shall have a particular area of ground for a year at a certain rent. If the Bill applied to such a case, the man having made the contract to-day may to-morrow say—"I claim this land not for a year, but for perpetuity. I claim it not at the rent I agreed to yesterday, but at a fair rent to be fixed. I claim not the area I agreed yesterday to rent, but an enlarged area." In short, the hon. Member's (Mr. Hunter's) proposal is that a man, a new comer, who to-day contracts for certain things as regards area, rent, and duration, shall be entitled to-morrow to overcome all the essentials of his contract.

Mr. HUNTER: There is a subsequent Amendment which shows that that is not the proposition I make.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: We will consider that Amendment when we come to it. What I have stated would be the effect of striking out the words in question. I quite admit that by a subsequent Amendment the hon. Gentleman gives seven years as the period during which the lease is not to be altered. What I have stated would be the effect of striking out the words proposed to be left out, and making the clause applicable to all crofters, no matter what time they came. While, therefore, I do not retract what I have said, I quite admit that in respect of the seven years, but only in respect of that point, are my criticisms inapplicable. Now, I put it to the judgment of the Committee, is there any example of such a thing in any civilized country? I say there is not. ["Yes; the Irish Act."] I think it will be found on an examination of the clauses that future tenancies are very much more restricted in the Irish Act than they are by anything suggested here. Of course, there was nothing like the boon given by the Irish Act as by this Bill. ["Oh!"] Well, there was no permanency of tenancy given, but only a lease equivalent to 15 years. There was no additional land given; but, however that may be, what I have laid before the Committee will be the effect of this proposal. The hon. Member has referred to the manner in which I have, on the part of the Government, conducted this Bill. That is a matter I am quite willing to leave to the judgment of the Committee. As to the opinion of the North of Scotland, I must say I should pay very great respect to the opinion of any part of the country of which I have the honour to be a native; but, of course, the opinion of Parliament must be taken as a whole; in arriving at our decision we must be guided by the wish of the whole country. I have no doubt that upon this Amendment the mind of the Committee is perfectly open to argument and conviction. I cannot but think the Committee will see that to strike out these words would not be consistent with the theory on which the Bill was framed, upon which it was presented to the House, and upon which the House was persuaded to give it a second reading. I venture to say that whatever the judgment of the Committee may be I should regard it as a distinct breach of faith with the House if the Government were voluntarily to accept a proposition which would convert the Bill into something different from what was intended. I really do not think the acceptance of the proposal would be in the interests of the persons who are likely to become crofters themselves, because if it is to be said that no landlord can in future let a piece of land on certain terms as to duration and as to rent, without the person with whom he has made his bargain being entitled to ask that his land should be increased, his rent altered, and that he should have a permanency, I fear that landlords will cease to let such land at all, and there will be great risk of much injury being done to the crofters.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I think the Committee must be pretty well convinced by this time of the worthlessness of this Bill. The Lord Advocate has referred to the promises held out when the Bill was introduced. What were those promises? Why, that the Bill was to deal with the grievances of the Highlanders. As a matter of fact we have seen, clause by clause, provisions calculated to remedy these grievances practically withdrawn, and I say deliberately that the Bill as it will pass through Committee will not be worth the time we have spent upon it. It will not settle this question. It may be considered a sop to the Highlanders; but I do not think it will prevent disturbances. Parliament will have to consider this question again almost immediately. It is a great pity that the House should spend seven nights of valuable time upon a Bill which is really of so little practical value. That is the conclusion at which I have arrived. The historical argument I consider a pleasant fiction on the part of the Government. No doubt there is a certain amount of historical tradition on the subject; but the same historical tradition applies with equal force to every district of Scotland. Why, then, does the right hon. and learned Gentleman not apply the Bill to the whole of Scotland? I regard this Bill as one of an altogether exceptional character, and in that respect I quite agree with hon. Members opposite. I do not like the Bill on economic grounds; but to prevent society in the Highlands falling to pieces it is necessary that Parliament should step in. The only justification for interfering in the manner proposed is to put the Land Question on a sound footing. Under the scheme which the Lord Advocate has adopted the landlords will be free to rack-rent all the new tenants. ["Oh!"] There is no reason why we should not expect that the landlords will rack-rent in the future, as they have done in the past. They will do so, and Parliament will have to interfere again. All this difficulty has arisen from the mistaken policy of the Government in refusing to adopt the principle of free sale. If they had adopted this principle the matter would have gone on very much according to economic law. They have, instead, adopted the principle of compensation, a system which has already broken down under the Act which the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate passed through the House some years ago. After the experience of that Act it is foolish to proceed with this Bill upon the basis of compensation. Sir, I think it would have been well for the Government to accept the principle of free sale once for all, and thus get themselves out of the difficulty in which they now find themselves with regard to future tenancies. If they had done so, the provisions of the Bill would have been of such a character that they would have been self-acting. But as the Bill stands, so far as we have gone, I say deliberately it is really not worth the time the House of Commons has spent upon it; and the sooner it is thrown aside the better. It will do nothing appreciable to remedy the grievances which are complained of in the Highlands.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I agree with what has just been said by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay). What I am afraid of is that this Bill will disturb all past relations, and will not settle future relations. That is the danger. I am anxious, whatever hon. Gentlemen may think, that this Bill, or any other Bill dealing with the crofters, should be a complete settlement of the question. I have had occasion many times to say something in disparagement of this Bill. I will read to the Lord Advocate a Resolution passed at a meeting in the Highlands—a copy of which has been forwarded to me; it is an example of scores of Resolutions I have received, dealing with this Bill in much stronger language than I have ever used. The Resolution is as follows:—"That this Convention of Lewis delegates——"

THE CHAIRMAN: I must call the hon. Member's attention to the fact that there is a specific Amendment before the Committee.

MR. MACFARLANE: If you rule, Sir, that it is not competent for me to discuss the general scope of the Bill upon a specific Amendment, I must adhere strictly to the Amendment. I understood, however, the Lord Advocate to depart rather from that Rule on this very question; he went into other subjects besides that dealt with by this Amendment. However, I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for North Aberdeen (Mr. Hunter) that this Amendment is essential; and if, Sir, you will not permit me to express the opinion of the people to whom the Bill is to apply I must bow to your ruling.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I should like to say a word or two upon this particular Amendment. Although I may agree with very much of what has been said by hon. Gentlemen, we must admit they have not altogether confined themselves to the proposition now before the Committee. The object of this particular Amendment is to put future tenants on the same footing as existing tenants. If this were done landlords will never permit any more crofters to settle on their land. It is the fact that in the Irish Act future tenants were not put on the same footing as present tenants; they were not to have that complete fixity of tenure and other privileges which were given to existing tenants. On the other hand, I think the Government made a very great mistake in depriving future tenants of all compensation for improvements. I hope something will yet be done to remedy this defeat.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I do not suppose my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate would have the slightest objection to extend the Bill so as to cover compensation for any improvements future tenants may make, if such a matter came within the scope of the Bill, and if it were at all necessary. But I want to call attention to what seems to be entirely overlooked here—namely, that the Bill is based upon what are believed to be rights belonging to a certain people, which rights have been somehow or other taken away. If the Bill is not based on such an idea as that there is no ground for it at all. If that be so, what possible claim can future tenants have who have no historical rights, real or imaginary, to be imported into the Bill, and placed exactly on the same footing as existing tenants? To import such people into the Bill would be practically to alter the whole scope and intention of the measure, as stated in the speech which the right hon. Gentleman the late Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan) made in introducing the measure, and as maintained consistently, and I must say with great force, by the Lord Advocate throughout these discussions. But we are surfeited with the protestations of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway that the Bill is such that it is not worth going on with it. We are weary of such protestations. If hon. Gentleman really believe the crofters in the Highlands do not wish this Bill to pass let them have it thrown out.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): We will try to throw it out.

Mr. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): The historical theory conjured up by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) is one to which I attach no importance at all; I think the Legislature should legislate to meet the wants and necessities of the present time. Reference has been made to Ireland, and to the fact that there is no provision for future tenants in the Irish Act. But provision does not require to be made for future tenants in that Act, because in Ireland there is free sale. I contend that the right hon. Gentleman did not give a shadow or shred of reason to justify the iniquitous distinction made between existing and future crofters. The only reason I can assign for it is that in the case of the existing crofters there is a reasonable presumption that they have either taken part in disorder themselves or encouraged others to do so, whereas future tenants have not done so. A more mischievous principle was never inserted in a Bill.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 89; Noes 70: Majority 19.—(Div. List, No. 80.)

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): Mr. Courtney, I accept the challenge of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the late Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald), and move that you do now report Progress. The Bill is a delusion and a sham, and we will not be parties to anything which will perpetuate the present unsatisfactory state of things in the Highlands. We move to report Progress because the Bill will not prove a solution of the question, and because we are simply wasting the time of the House by discussing it. We are told that this measure is based upon the theory of history; but I believe it is opposed to such a theory, and I will very briefly explain how.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member will be distinctly out of Order in entering into that question on the Motion to report Progress. He must confine himself to the reasons for reporting Progress.

Dr. CLARK: I was going to give my reasons for wishing to report Progress. I wish to prevent the time of the House being wasted, and I was anxious to show that by the remedies you propose you will increase, instead of diminish, the disease. If it is not proper for me to go into that question I must content myself by moving to report Progress, on the ground that it is idle to debate further the measure in its present form.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Dr. Clark.*)

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I quite agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) that it is really a waste of time to proceed further with this Bill. So far as I can make out, of the 40,000 holdings in the district contemplated by the Bill, not more than 2,000 or 3,000 at the most would be dealt with by it. Now, 2,000 or 3,000 crofters are such a very small proportion of the people who have been causing disturbances in the Highlands, that it is impossible to hope that the passing of this Bill will remedy the grievances or pacify the country. At the same time you have under the Bill very expensive machinery. We have some idea of what the working of the Irish Land Act has cost. We are going to have in Scotland, for the sake of 2,000 or 3,000 people, very expensive machinery; we are going to be landed in a very considerable annual expenditure, an expenditure which I believe will be very nearly as much as the whole of the rents of the crofts dealt with. I really think it would be much cheaper for Parliament to make a present of the rents to the landlords than to go on with this Bill. Clause after clause we have endeavoured to have the Bill extended, and to make it of some use. We are beginning to recognize more and more fully how narrow the limits of the Bill are; and I have certainly come to the conclusion that the Bill is not worth the time the House of Commons has spent upon it. I said the same thing in respect of the Agricultural Holdings Act for Scotland, and I repeat it in respect of this Bill. This Bill is not at all adequate to the occasion.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I think my hon. Friends are entirely wrong in the course they have now taken. I have said already, and I say now, I do not think the Bill will be very effective; but, at the same time, I am bound to recognize the fact that it does contain some most beneficial principles. The Bill is a very large step in the right direction, and I must express my astonishment that this attempt to defeat it should have come from the Representative of Caithness, one of the two counties in which I believe the Bill will be of some effect. The time we have spent on the Bill has not been altogether wasted; and, therefore, I hope the proposal of my hon. Friend (Dr. Clark) will not be accepted.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I venture to appeal to the hon. Gentleman (Dr. Clark) to withdraw his Motion to report Progress. It is very little use having Parliamentary discussions at all if, because we cannot succeed in realizing all we want, we destroy even the very little good that a measure may effect. I have voted with the Crofter Members against the Government in every division; but I shall support the Government on this question if it is unfortunately pressed to a division; and I am certain that will be the course adopted by every English Radical Member who sits near me.

Mr. MASON (Lanark, Mid): I trust that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) will withdraw his Motion. I am not at all satisfied with the Bill; but I would recommend the Crofter Members, whom I have supported all through these discussions, to accept the Bill as it stands, seeing that there is no hope of fighting the Government with their allies on the other side of the House. If the hon. Gentleman would withdraw his Motion and allow the Government to take the Bill as it is, I am quite convinced that before two years are over it will be found necessary to amend it, and that, in fact, it will be amended in a liberal manner, and a manner suitable to the needs of the people of the Highlands. I hope my hon. Friend will not persevere with his Motion, and that we shall cease to take any further divisions against the details of the Bill.

The Marquess of STAFFORD (Sutherland): I hope the hon. Member will withdraw this Motion. Whatever may be the shortcomings of the Bill, I may remind him that the future prosperity of the fishing industry depends very largely upon its passage.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I have refrained from taking upon myself the responsibility of throttling the Bill. I am willing that any Bill which will benefit people, however few, shall be passed if it can be passed. I have had many communications from all parts of Scotland in regard to this Bill, but not one in its favour. The Resolution which you, Mr. Chairman, would not allow me, a few minutes ago, to read—I believe I am now entitled to read it if I wished—was to the effect that a meeting of Lewis delegates expresses its contempt for the Government Bill. I have not gone so far as that. Whatever I may have felt, I have not expressed my contempt for the Bill. As I have said, I declined to take the responsibility of moving at any of the stages the rejection of the Bill, although the communications I have received against the Bill have been innumerable, whilst not one has been in its favour. One reason I had for delaying any action against the Bill was that I had a faint hope that some slight amendment might be introduced into the measure. But the Bill is like the law of the Medes and Persians—it is unalterable. My hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lanarkshire (Mr. Mason) has spoken of the alliance between the Lord Advocate and the Front Opposition Bench. There is only one mistake in that statement. My hon. Friend should not have called it the Front Opposition Bench, but the Front Co-operation Bench, because every Amendment calculated to extend the scope of the Bill has been mainly defeated by the votes of hon. Gentlemen opposite, and every Amendment intended to restrict the operation of the Bill has come from hon. Gentlemen opposite. There are, however, several reasons why the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) should not press this Motion. One is that he cannot carry it—he will be defeated. I would advise him to withdraw the Motion, let the Bill go through Committee, and let the responsibility for this miserable, diluted, and rubbishy measure rest with the Government.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): Whether the line pursued in the Bill is proper or not, we are certainly not pursuing the proper course at the present moment. It may be right to amend the Bill, or to throw it out; but it cannot by any possibility be right to waste time in discussing futile Motions for Adjournment. If hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway think that it is a Bill which ought to be thrown out, I would recommend them to move an Amendment on Report and throw it out if they can. But, in the meanwhile, we ought to be allowed to get through the remaining Amendments on the Paper, and then see whether the Bill still deserves all the censure which has been heaped upon it.

Mr. BEITH (Glasgow, Central): I hope my hon. Friend will withdraw the Motion to report Progress.

Dr. R. MACDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I, too, hope my hon. Friend will withdraw his Motion. I do not suppose anybody in the House can think less of the Bill than I do. I can freely say, with my hon. Friend the Member for Argyllshire (Mr. Macfarlane), that I have not received a single communication from Scotland in praise of this Bill. I have, however, received hundreds of Resolutions informing me that I shall never be elected for Ross-shire again, because I do not go in for rejecting the Bill. That is the case with all of us. All the Crofter Members are endangering their seats by going in for this Bill. Notwithstanding this fact, I hope my hon. Friend will withdraw his Motion, and, as the hon. Member for Argyllshire (Mr. Macfarlane) has said, let the Government take the whole responsibility of the measure. I am perfectly certain that, within a twelvemonth, the Government will have to spend more on an expedition to the Highlands than would be required to put half the crofters on their legs.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I shall not withdraw my Motion; but allow it to be negatived, as a great many Amendments have been treated. I made the Motion because the late Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) challenged us to take that course. We will divide the Committee upon two important Amendments which still stand upon the Paper, and then, either on the Report stage or the third reading, wash our hands of the measure by doing all we can to throw it out. With regard to the observations of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell), I should like to say I do not believe that 5 per cent of my constituents will be affected by the Bill. As Caithness contains most of the men who were reported upon by the Royal Commission, and as very few of them will reap any benefit through this Bill, I am anxious to do all I can to prevent the time of the House of Commons being wasted in passing the measure. There are two important points yet to be decided; but, of course, we shall be defeated by the co-operation of the Whigs and Tories. We will wait and take a decisive action, as the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. A. J. Balfour) has suggested, upon the third reading.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I may, perhaps, be allowed to put myself right with the Committee. If I had imagined that my suggestion would have been an incentive to report Progress I certainly would not have made it. What I said was that it was wearisome to hear hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway saying the Bill was worthless. If they really thought so, they could, at the proper time, vote against its passage. I had no Motion to report Progress in my mind; and I do not think it occurred to the hon. Gentleman (Dr. Clark) to make such a Motion until he was passing through the Lobby.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to move the second Amendment which stands in my name—namely, to add to the clause the following sub-section:—

> "But Part IV. of this Act shall apply to all crofters and cottars in the counties of Argyll, Inverness, Ross, Sutherland, Caithness, Orkney and Shetland, Nairn, Elgin, Banff, Aberdeen, and Kincardine."

The Lord Advocate must feel he has created a very unfavourable impression by the stubborn way in which he has resisted all Amendments. I wish to offer what I think is a reasonable compromise in this matter. The object of my proposal is that one of the operative parts of this Bill shall be extended to the Highland counties—that Part IV. of the Bill—that is the part which refers to compensation for improvements—shall be extended to the whole of the Highland counties. Compensation for improvements is admitted to be just according to the strictest principles of political economy; and I must remind the Committee that if you reject this Amendment there will only be one corner of Scotland—the North-East corner—in which there will be any compensation for improvements. We know that as long ago as 1870 compensation for improvements was given in Ireland. We also know that in England we have, through the Agricultural Holdings Act, compensation for improvements, and that in certain counties there is a tenant right, which meets the necessities of the case. In the South of Scotland, I admit, the case is different. Almost all the holdings there depend upon contract; and we have an Agricultural Holdings Act. In the Western Highlands we propose, by this Bill, to protect the tenants in the right to compensation for improvements; but we exclude, as the Bill now stands, that right to compensation from certain of the Highland counties—namely, the Highland counties which are mentioned in my Amendment. I propose to extend the right of compensation not only to existing crofters in the counties I specify, but to all future tenants. I do sincerely hope it may be possible for the Lord Advocate to accept this moderate compromise.

Amendment proposed,

> At the end of the Clause, to add the following sub-section:—"But Part IV. of this Act shall apply to all crofters and cottars in the counties of Argyll, Inverness, Ross, Sutherland, Caithness, Orkney and Shetland, Nairn, Elgin, Banff, Aberdeen, and Kincardine."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I do not know how far it is competent for my hon. Friend to move this Amendment after it has been declared, by decisions and votes of the House, that the Bill is not to apply to these additional counties. I may say, however, upon the merits of the proposal, I feel very much with my hon. Friend that the Compensation Clauses, which are a good deal simpler than those in the Act of 1883, might very well be extended not only to these counties, but to Scotland generally; but I am afraid that is a matter rather beyond the scope of this Bill. The Committee now knows the scope of the Bill; and I put it to my hon. Friend whether it would not be better to look forward to the hope of being able to amend the defects in the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883 by making a more simple and liberal provision for compensation applicable to Scotland generally?

Dr. R. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I support this Amendment very cordially, because I should like to get the benefit of some little portion of this Bill for my constituents in the North of Scotland. It is quite evident that the cottars will be placed, as it were, between two stools. I think it is a great pity the Government did not give relief at once in the shape of free sale. They will be put off with the usual anæsthetic—they will be told they must bear the ills they have until the leaven, in the shape of a Local Government Bill comes, in which all evils have to be remedied.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I do not think there is any force in the objection the Lord Advocate has raised that this Amendment has practically been negatived already; it was quite a different Amendment that was negatived. That Amendment was to give all the benefits of the Bill to the whole of the Highland counties; but this Amendment is simply to extend the Compensation Clauses to the Highland counties generally. If the Lord Advocate really sympathizes with the Amendment, the way to give practical effect to his sympathy is to accept it. It is idle to talk about waiting until we can amend the Agricultural Holdings Act. We have got a lot of other Business before us. If what my hon. Friend proposes is worth doing, let us do it at once.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): While I sympathize with the principle of tenants, from whatever part of the country they may come, receiving compensation for unexhausted improvements, I see the greatest possible difficulty in accepting this Amendment and adding it to the Bill. If you accept this suggestion, you must import into the Bill a definition of crofter throughout the whole of Scotland; and if you once proceed to define what is a crofter in every county of Scotland, I cannot conceive how, with anything like consistency or reason, it would be possible to resist the application of the Bill to the whole of the country. That would, no doubt, be an inclusion which would give great satisfaction to many hon. Members who have supported this Amendment; but it would be contrary to the whole course of our proceedings in regard to this measure. I do not think the Committee, generally speaking, at all agree with the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Dr. Farquharson), when he said we are all of opinion that free sale ought to have been imported into the Bill as a much more convenient way of deciding compensation for improvements. That is an opinion held by a small portion of the Committee; and it is certainly no argument whatever in support of this Amendment. For the reasons which I have given I sincerely hope the Lord Advocate will adhere to the course the Government have announced, because if we are to make this extension I do not see where we are to stop.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): The Preamble of the Bill is that—

> "Whereas it is expedient to amend the law relating to the tenure of land by crofters in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland."

If the counties named in the Amendment are counties in which crofters hold land, why should they be excluded from the benefits of the Bill? Can there be any objection in equity to extending the operation of the Bill to the counties proposed? I hope the Lord Advocate will make some little concession on this one point at least.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): There is this difference between the tenants in these counties and those in the Southern counties—that while in the latter the landlords make the improvements, and the tenant pays for them in his rent, in the former the improvements represent the capital and labour of the tenants, for which they are entitled to compensation when they are turned out. All we ask is that, when these people are turned out, they shall receive some compensation for the capital they have invested and the labour they have given in the improvement of the land. I cordially support the Amendment of my hon. Friend (Sir George Campbell). You are not asked that the people of these counties shall have fair rents fixed; you are not asked that they shall have their holdings enlarged—you are simply asked that when the people are turned out they shall be compensated for improvements.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I do hope that since the Lord Advocate has expressed himself favourable to the principle of this Amendment he will consider it by Report. When he looks into the facts of the case he will see he may well give effect to the Amendment without any danger of a wide extent. It is admitted that this Amendment is entirely different to that which has been negatived, inasmuch, as it only proposes to extend the Compensation Clauses to the Highland counties generally. I fear it would be very difficult to secure an extension of the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883, as the Lord Advocate suggested. It is perfectly true, as the hon. Gentleman the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) has said, that the conditions in the Northern counties are totally different to those in the Southern counties. The farmers do not build their own houses. In the North of Scotland there is a peculiar condition of things. It has been said that the Royal Commission did not visit Aberdeenshire. Well, I am not an Aberdeenshire man, but I constituted myself a volunteer Commissioner, and made inquiries in that district, and I was surprised to find the enormous extent to which the farmers have built houses without any security whatever as to compensation for their outlay. This is the case with regard to Aberdeenshire estates, and it prevails to an enormous extent; therefore, I say it is a peculiar state of things, and one which should be adequately met by a provision in Part IV. of this Bill. It is a state of things we are not likely to find a remedy for in the Agricultural Holdings Act, which necessarily applies to much larger areas; consequently I trust the right hon. and learned Gentleman will assent to this proposition. It is not to extend the Agricultural Holdings Act unreasonably to parts of the country where contracts are the rule, but to apply it to parts where contracts are not the rule.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): As the only English Radical in the House at this moment, I should like to express what is the feeling of English Radicals on this point. I earnestly support the appeal the hon. Member has just made to the Lord Advocate. It seems to me that the principle of granting this has been sanctioned in one case, and I, therefore, cannot see why it should not be sanctioned in another. As to the argument that the acceptance of the Amendments would so extend the scope of the Bill that no one would know where it would stop, I should like to know what Amendments have been accepted in favour of the crofters? One Amendment, providing that all the Commissioners shall understand Gaelic, has been adopted; but that, I understand, is the only one that has been adopted in the course of these discussions. I do not think I ever recollect a measure in which the Government have been so obstinate in the way of refusing Amendments as on this Bill, and I hope they will change that policy on the present occasion.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:* — Ayes 76; Noes 103: Majority 27.—(Div. List, No. 81.)

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I am sorry the Lord Advocate felt compelled to reject the last Amendment, though I agree that it would have been almost impossible to apply the words of that Amendment to this Act. The Lord Advocate made some observations as to the Irish Land Act of 1881, in which I think he was mistaken—no doubt excusably—owing to the extreme complexity of the matter. I think he will find this proposal drafted on almost similar lines. Under the Act of 1881 the tenants could apply to have a revaluation of rent every 15 years, and they get compensation for improvements. The only additional provision I can see is this—that of increasing holdings. But to come to the point of my Amendment. In the Act of 1881 certain provisions were put as to future tenants; and I do not see why they should not, on the ground of equal justice, be introduced into this Act also. The provisions as to future tenants were divided into three. A future tenant went into a holding at a certain rent, and, of course, he had to pay that rent; but if, afterwards, the landlord chose to attempt to raise the rent on him, three courses were open to him. He could either submit to that rent, and then he would have all the rights as to fixity of tenure that a present tenant had under the Act; but that course was seldom adopted. The second course was for him to sell his tenancy, subject to the increased rent, and then demand from the landlord compensation for the diminution in value caused by the increase of rent; a course which would be clearly inapplicable to this Bill, since we have not adopted the principle of free sale. The third course, and that to which I wish especially to call the right hon. and learned Gentleman's attention, was this—that if the landlord demanded an increase of rent the tenant was entitled to say—"I will not pay it;" to leave the holding, and then recover from the landlord compensation for disturbance as it is called under the 4th section of the Act. The compensation varies according to the amount paid. Under the 9th section of the Irish Land Act, where the amount of rent is £30—and the tenancies within this Bill are all under £30 rent—in these cases, the tenants going out rather than pay an increase of rent, will be entitled to compensation for disturbance not exceeding seven years' rent of their holdings. I do not see that there ought to be great difficulty in applying that principle to the present Act.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order! If I understand the hon. Gentleman aright he is leading up to a proposal to introduce something into the Act for the benefit of future tenants. [Mr. CHANCE: Yes.] I am of opinion that in the proposal of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Aberdeenshire the Committee refused to bring future tenants within the Act; therefore it would be inconsistent with the resolution already arrived at to discuss the proposal of the hon. Member.

MR. CHANCE: I appreciate your ruling, Sir. I should not, of course, propose to apply this to future tenants. The distinction is that in the previous Amendment it was proposed to give the main benefits of the Act to future tenants; but I should not dream of doing that at all. I merely propose to give them a certain sort of compensation for disturbance. I do not know whether I should be in Order in doing that; but I would ask you for your ruling in the matter.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. Member is precluded by the previous decision from applying the Act to future tenants at all.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): Before this clause is agreed to, I ask the Lord Advocate to consider before the Report stage the advisability of introducing this Amendment. It has been working fairly satisfactorily in Ireland, although to a small extent; but no objection can be found to it. I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman will give us some assurance that he will do this.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I shall be quite willing to look into the subject; but I cannot say positively anything with regard to the admission of the clause. I was not in the House when the Irish Land Act was passing through.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman will look into the clause of the Irish Land Act.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I shall look through the provisions which the hon. Gentleman refers to; but I cannot be expected to give a pledge without much more careful consideration of the matter.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY: I think we have a right to expect that it should be so, unless it is a principle that the greater the disturbance made the greater the concession which the Government will make to the demand. The Irish tenants made more disturbance than the crofters. I think the right hon. and learned Gentleman should have no difficulty in giving us an assurance that he will consider the matter.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I will consider the matter, and look very carefully into the Irish Act.

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 17 (Procedure in fixing fair rent).

On Motion of The Lord ADVOCATE, the following Amendment made:—Page 8, line 17, leave out from "the remuneration" to "determine," in line 20, inclusive.

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 18 (Procedure in enlarging holdings).

Amendment proposed,

In page 8, after line 32, insert "in assigning land for the enlargement of crofters' holdings, it shall be competent for the Commissioners, if they think fit, to make such order or orders with respect to the fencing of the said land as they shall consider necessary or expedient.

"It shall also be competent to the Commissioners to decide summarily any questions relating to the boundaries or marches between crofts, or between crofts and adjoining lands.

"In the event of any dispute arising as to whether a person is a "crofter" within the meaning of this Act, it shall be competent for the Commissioners to determine such question summarily."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I have a question to ask with regard to the powers of the Commissioners with respect to fencing the land assigned for the enlargement of crofters' holdings. I presume that the first part of the Amendment refers to grazing as well as arable land. If I am correct it appears to me that this is a very large power to give to the Commissioners, because the cost of fencing additional grazing land would probably be much greater than the cost of fencing arable land. I have not the figures with me, but I know that the cost of such fencing is very heavy indeed.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): The clause is proposed as much in the interest of the landlord as of the crofter, and would only apply in cases where it might be desirable that the land should be inclosed.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I am informed that disputes sometimes arise between crofters and landlords with regard to the boundaries of grazing land, which I think would be obviated by introducing, in line 7, the words "and grazing."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I agree with the principle of the hon. Gentleman's proposal; but I would suggest the words should be "including grazing."

Amendment proposed to said proposed Amendment after "crofts," in line 7, to add "including grazing."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH: Then I suggest that we should add at the end "and grazing."

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I think we should say "including grazing and arable land." I think that decidedly the best alteration.

Amendment proposed to said proposed Amendment, in line 7, after "including grazing, to add "and arable land."—(*Mr. J. W. Barclay.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

Amendment, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 19 (Duration of the Act).

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I rise to ask the Lord Advocate to agree to strike out the word "five," in line 35, and insert "nineteen." If you only allow the Land Commissioners to make engagements for five years, they will probably be unable to make the necessary enlargements, because there will be a limited number of large farms let on 19 years' leases, and until they expire the enlargements could take place. I cannot see why the period of five years should be fixed upon; but my proposal is to take 19 years, which is the term of the leases.

Amendment proposed, in page 8, line 35, to leave out the word "five," and insert the word "nineteen."—(*Dr. Clark.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'five' stand part of the Clause."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I think it would be very injurious to limit the period during which the powers of the Land Commission were to be exercised. My idea is that the clause expresses what is a fair period.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I think it quite unnecessary to make this alteration, the result of which would be that we should be burdened with the expenses of the machinery for another term of years.

Amendment *negatived.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clauses 20 to 22 *agreed to.*

Clause 23 (Use of sheriff court houses).

On Motion of The LORD ADVOCATE, the following Amendments made:—Page 9, line 10, after "use," insert "free of charge;" page 9, line 15, after "Court," add—

"with right to exact the same fees as are exigible by them for service at the sittings of the Sheriff Court."

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 24 (Record of proceedings; transmission of applications by sheriff clerk; sheriff clerk's remuneration).

MR. MACFARLANE: (Argyll): The object of the Amendment in my name is to bring a record of the transactions of the Land Commission within more easy reach of the tenant. In my county a tenant might have to travel 100 miles to ascertain the order of the Court; and therefore I propose that the record should be kept in the local Court.

Amendment proposed, in page 9, line 19, after the word "clerk," to insert the words, "or his depute for the said district."—(*Mr. Macfarlane.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I beg to support the Amendment of my hon. Friend. It would be very inconvenient in the larger counties if the words suggested by him were not inserted.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (MR. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I entirely agree that it is desirable that this book should be kept in a local office. I do not, however, think it necessary to make the second similar Amendment which the hon. Member proposes to the subsequent part of the clause.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): If the right hon. and learned Gentleman will agree to make these records as accessible as possible I do not wish to press the Amendment.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: The subject shall receive consideration.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clagse 25 (Execution of orders made by Commission) *agreed to.*

Clause 26 (Forms of Procedure).

On Motion of The LORD ADVOCATE, the following Amendment made:—In page 9, line 38, at end, add—

"It shall be in the power of the Land Commission to make rules with reference to proceedings before the Commission, and also, with the approval of the Treasury, to fix a scale of costs and fees to be charged in carrying the Act into execution, and the taxation of such costs and fees, and the persons by whom, and the manner in which, such costs and fees are to be paid."

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 27 (Sole arbiter may be chosen) *agreed to.*

Clause 28 (Saving of the Agricultural Holdings Act, 1883).

Amendment proposed, in page 10, to leave out lines 9 and 10.—(*Mr. M'Culloch.*)

THE LORD ADVOCATE (MR. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): The hon. Gentleman will see that we make a more liberal provision by giving the landlord and tenant the option of settlement under either Act.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): In the case of manures the crofter is entitled to compensation under the Agricultural Holdings Act. Is he entitled under this Act also?

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: The hon. Member will see that the case is covered by the clause; the words are—

"Such valuation shall be made, unless the landlord and the crofter otherwise agree, by the Land Commission, according to the procedure prescribed by this Act, but otherwise subject to the provisions of the said Act."

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): Before the clause is put, I wish to understand the exact application of the last words of the clause—

"But otherwise subject to the provisions of the said Act."

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: What we provide for specially in this Act are permanent improvements; but we do not desire to cut off the claim of the crofter, if he has been a manuring tenant, which he would have under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY: Would it not be better to have an additional Schedule to the Bill? In the first part of the Act the crofter is to be compensated for all improvements. I do not see how the two Acts can work together, and therefore I propose to leave out the words—

"But otherwise subject to the provisions of the said Act,"

because I do not see any necessity for them. I advocate this Amendment because the wording of the Agricultural Holdings Act is too complicated to be understood by the bulk of the people concerned.

Amendment proposed,

In page 10, to leave out the words, "but otherwise subject to the provisions of the said Act."—(*Mr. J. W. Barclay.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (MR. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): The question is how the compensation is to be claimed? I do not think the Amendment proposed is desirable; however, I will look into the matter before Report.

Amendment *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 29 (Definitions).

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): The Amendment I am about to move is one of great importance, and I hope the Lord Advocate will take it into his consideration now, because upon its adoption or rejection the fate of the great bulk of the crofters depends, and especially of the best class of crofters. The question has already been raised on the Amendment of the noble Marquess the Member for Sutherlandshire (the Marquess of Stafford); but it only then affected the question of rent, whereas my Amendment affects the crofter as far as getting compensation for improvements and extension of his holding is concerned. I think we ought to be as accurate as possible in defining the term "crofter." During the last 10 or 12 years it has been the custom, and especially since the passing of the Irish Land Act, to force leases upon crofters. Now, the crofters have always fought against leases, because they are under the impression that by accepting a lease they are giving up their right to compensation. A great many tenants have lately been offered the alternative of accepting these leases or going, and they have accepted the leases. By inserting these words you will take in a great number of crofters who have been obliged to accept leases in this way, and who will be very much benefited. I trust, moreover, that the Lord Advocate will show that he is conceding something to the crofters who have a hereditary right. The hereditary argument strongly applies here, and if you apply it at all in the Bill you ought to apply it here.

Amendment proposed, in page 10, line 16, after the word "holding," to insert the words "by lease for a term of years or."—(*Dr. Clark.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I was under the impression that the whole question of applying this Act to leaseholders had been very fully discussed, and negatived. I must say that we are now delaying the Committee on an argument which was stated at the outset to be outside the scope of this Bill—namely, that it should apply to leaseholders. The Bill is intended to apply to tenants under the customary tenure; and if a person has taken himself out of that category, that is a very different position to the position of the tenant we are dealing with; and it would not be right that the Bill should step in and alter the existing arrangement. I think there may be some hard cases arise; but I do not think the hon. Member was happy in instancing improving leases, because we all know that in those cases the tenant gets the holding at a very low figure, which he pays partly by rent and partly by improvements.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): It will be remembered that in the Irish Land Act it was provided that if a tenant could show that a lease had been forced upon him it should be set aside. That provision has been applied, and applied successfully; and, therefore, I would suggest that we should leave out the words "from year to year." Persons of this class only accept leases of this kind with the greatest reluctance, and therefore they ought not to be excluded from the benefit of this Act. What I want to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman is this—that the Government shall treat these people somewhat on the same basis as the Irish peasants were treated by the Irish Land Act; and if they can show that leases have been recently forced upon them they shall be able to obtain the benefits of this Act—such as they are.

The CHAIRMAN: A previous Amendment to Clause 6 on this point was negatived, and the Committee have, therefore, refused to go into the question of leases. This Amendment, therefore, will be out of Order.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): But that Amendment on Clause 6 did not apply to other clauses. I would ask you, Sir, can a division of this Committee upon a question on Clause 6 affect a question on Clause 8, and Clauses 11 and 12? We have altered the Bill as far as Section 3 is concerned; but Sections 4 and 5 have not been affected by that alteration. I should like to see the same principle applied to this case.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Section 6, on which we took a division, only applies to the fixing of rent, while this Amendment applies to the fixing of tenure; and I would ask you, therefore, Sir, if that is not different?

THE CHAIRMAN: This Definition Clause which we are now on applies to the whole Bill; and therefore the Amendment, if passed, would be inconsistent with the Amendment we negatived on Clause 6. Under those circumstances, it is out of Order at this stage.

DR. CLARK: I beg to withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.): I do not think the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate can complain that I have troubled him much with Amendments. I will withdraw the first one which stands in my name; but I think my second one, in page 10, line 16, to leave out all after "holding," to "holding," in line 17, inclusive, is a very important one. I represent a very important group of boroughs, the inhabitants of which are greatly interested in this point, as many of them are engaged part of the year fishing, and I shall be glad if the right hon. and learned Gentleman can see his way to accept my Amendment.

Amendment proposed, in page 10, line 16, to leave out all after the word "holding," to "holding," in line 17, inclusive.—(*Mr. Macdonald Cameron.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): Of course, the object of introducing these words was to cut out that kind of person who has some other business, and does not reside on his holding. I do not know whether the words as they now stand might not be pressed against a man who is away half the year fishing, and I shall not press them if any satisfactory words can be found.

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): I cannot see that that difficulty stands in the way of the acceptance of the words of the Bill as they stand. It appears to me that the case of such people as have been mentioned will be met by the other sections of the Bill; but I understand that the words of this clause are supposed to apply to a very different kind of persons—who are really burgesses having a small holding outside the towns in which they live. That is that they have their holdings as a luxury. I am bound to say that I think the right hon. and learned Gentleman's words are quite right; and I do not see how the hon. Member can imagine that his constituents will be damaged by them, unless they are tradesmen first of all and small farmers afterwards.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: Perhaps I may suggest that the difficulty may be so far solved by leaving out the word "habitually."

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I was just going to suggest to leave out the word "habitually," and insert the word "generally."

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: No; I think it is better to leave out the word "habitually" altogether.

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: Yes; leave out the word "habitually" altogether.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON: There is a large class who will be entirely excluded from the benefits of this Bill if my Amendment is not accepted.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I put down an Amendment to insert "or in the vicinity of."

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I should be sorry to cut out anybody; but the words are meant to meet the case which exists in some parts of burgesses who have farms outside.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I am quite sure that a very large class of persons is by no means covered by these words. I have a large number of letters from people, including such persons as the doctor and the minister, complaining that this clause will exclude their holdings from the operation of the Bill.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I am afraid that this is neither a Clerical nor a Medical Bill; and, therefore, I cannot see why gentlemen of those Professions should be included.

MR. MACFARLANE: I am not advocating the case of these gentlemen; but I want to know whether the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate will modify the clause so as to include the spirit and not the letter of the Bill?

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I would suggest to the right hon. and learned Gentleman that if, instead of the word "resides," he inserted "cultivates," his holding, he would obtain his object.

DR. R. MACDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I think that the best Amendment we can accept is that of the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay), which comes next.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick): I am quite willing to accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for Inverness-shire (Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh), which comes as an Amendment to mine. A number of the people whom I have in my eye are evicted crofters in the old sense of the term, and I think that they are entitled to get all the benefits of any measure of this kind.

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): We shall be much better without the word "generally." I think the word "resides" absolutely will be much better than any other. The hon. Member wants to go further than is proposed in any of the suggestions yet made, for he wants to include in the Bill people who live on their feus. I beg to say that we should be going far beyond the instruction given to this Committee by the House if we were to go into the grievances of people who live on their small feus, but who are also small farmers outside. I think the whole case will be met if we merely strike out the word "habitually."

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I want to put a question to the Lord Advocate. Suppose a crofter has two holdings and he lives on one of them, will he lose the benefits of this Act in regard to the other?

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I am afraid that he would only get the benefits of the Act for the one on which he resided last.

MR. MACFARLANE: Then he would be deprived of the benefits of the Act in regard to his second holding?

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: Well, that is not the question.

MR. MACFARLANE: Suppose a man has a holding half of which is situated on one property and half on another. Suppose he has a small patch of arable land from one landlord and a house and some pasture from another, will he be excluded?

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I entirely agree that that is a case that ought to be met; and I shall be willing to accept an Amendment dealing with the matter.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): There are a great many crofters in the Highlands who have houses inside some of the little hamlets, and I say that they are quite entitled to the benefits of this Act.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick): I beg leave to withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): Now, I beg to move to omit the word "habitually."

Amendment *agreed to.*

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I move, in page 10, line 17, after "on," insert "or in the vicinity of." The object of the Amendment is this. Suppose a man has a holding consisting of two parts—one in the hamlet and the other outside. That is a case which ought to be considered, and it will not involve a great matter of disadvantage to the landowners.

Amendment proposed, in page 10, line 17, after the word "on," to insert "or in the vicinity of."—(*Mr. J. W. Barclay.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): May I point out to the Committee that these words would take no cognizance of the kind of land which was in question? A man worth £5,000 a-year might come in as a crofter, under these words, and take advantage of the benefits of this Act.

MR. GREGORY (Sussex, East Grinstead): It appears to me that we have got into a difficulty by omitting the word "habitually." We do not want to include within the Act a man who has other means of living; and therefore I would suggest that we should include the words "who is dependent on his holding."

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): The vital objection to that is that most crofters in the Highlands are fishermen, and they would be excluded altogether by such words.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): How would the word "occupies" do?

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I am afraid that residence is the only qualification that we can accept.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): How would it do to say "lives in a crofting parish?"

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I think we must have the residential qualification?

Mr. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I think that the question of occupation should be quite sufficient. I have known this residential qualification used for the oppression of tenants, and I can quote cases in which people who have been unable to live on their holdings have been deprived of benefits to which they were entitled.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): What we want to know is whether such cases as have been mentioned ought not to be included in the Bill; and if the right hon. and learned Gentleman says they ought, then we are willing to wait for him to introduce words to deal with the matter.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I thought I had made myself perfectly clear on this point. If a person has a piece of land quite separate from his house, and he is a prosperous person apart from this land, he is not the kind of person who should come under the provisions of this Bill; but if it is a genuine case it ought to be dealt with.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): But how does the right hon. Gentleman intend to deal with it?

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I propose to deal with it by inserting words to show that he should have land which is part of the same possession.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY: I think that we should have some definition from the right hon. and learned Gentleman now. He appears to be afraid that a number of people are going to get the benefits of this Act who are not entitled to them; but I do not think the benefits will be worth so much after all.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): It really seems to me that hon. Members opposite are pressing the right hon. and learned Gentleman too much. He has expressed his sympathy with the point they have advanced, and he has promised to deal with the question on Report. I hope, therefore, we may be allowed now to come to a decision. If the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) is not satisfied with the undertaking of the right hon. and learned Gentleman let him press his Amendment, and let us take a division upon it.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:* — Ayes 84; Noes 133: Majority 49. — (Div. List, No. 82.)

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I beg to move after the word "holding" in the same line to insert these words—

"Or who resides in a crofting parish and is mainly dependent on agriculture or fishing for his livelihood."

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): That would involve a very large and complicated addition to the clause, and therefore I cannot accept it. I think the hon. Member would do better to bring up the words on Report.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): Many of the people living in these crofting parishes are fishermen in addition to possessing a holding, and I think they should be included in the Bill. I think the Committee should give effect, therefore, to the Amendment of my hon. Friend.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I do not think that the contention of the hon. Member is unreasonable; but it is a difficult thing to introduce into the Bill matter of such moment on occasions like this and on the spur of the moment. I cannot see, therefore, that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate is unreasonable in asking that the question shall be left over until Report.

Mr. CHANCE: I think that this is a matter which can be better dealt with at this stage than on Report. It involves a simple matter of fact, and ought to be settled at once.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The hon. Member who has brought in this Amendment does not appear to be aware of its effect. He is only including one industry which a crofter may be open to engage himself in during a portion of his time; but I think there are many others besides fishing which ought not to be excluded from the benefits of this Act. The hon.

Member has contributed some exceedingly valuable suggestions during the sittings of the Committee on this Bill; but if he will allow me to say so, I think he has gone a little beyond his depth on this occasion. No doubt the Amendment is intended to get rid of a difficulty, but the acceptance of it would bring about a much greater one. I hope the hon. Member will not press the matter.

Mr. CHANCE: The Amendment points out that a man must be mainly dependent upon his croft or fishing, and I am quite sure that hon. Members will agree that unless he is so "mainly dependent" he ought not to have the benefits of this Act.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD: If they are not "mainly dependent on agriculture" they ought not to be included in the Bill, and it is for that reason that this Amendment should not be pressed. I earnestly trust it will not be insisted upon.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I agree with the right hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) that the Amendment would introduce fresh difficulties into the Bill, and that it is better that it should not be pressed.

Mr. CHANCE: I shall be glad to withdraw my Amendment, on the understanding that the right hon. and learned Gentleman will introduce words on Report to meet the case which has been brought forward.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I will endeavour to introduce words on Report which will meet the views of the Committee.

Mr. J. E. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I should like the right hon. and learned Gentleman to consider this point. Take the case of a crofter who is fairly prosperous, and is anxious to enlarge his holding, and succeeds in getting an additional piece of land from another landlord, but continues to reside on his old croft. How will he be included in the Bill? How can you deal with a case of that sort, unless you insert some such Amendment as this?

Mr. CHANCE: Surely a man should not be excluded from the benefits of the Act because, with a view of adding to his income, he lives in a miserable little crofting village, and does some blacksmith's work? That would really be discouraging industry amongst these poor people.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I propose to meet cases of that kind.

Mr. CHANCE: Then, under those circumstances, I withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): I beg, Sir, to move the Amendment which stands in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Lanark (Mr. Baird), which is as follows:—In page 10, line 18, to leave out "thirty," and insert "fifteen." It is not desirable to create a number of small farms upon which, in a precarious climate, people can scarcely exist. I remember, for instance, parts of my own county upon which the population barely exists. This state of existence is unsuited to modern times. Families either consolidate their holdings, or give them up and retire; but for Parliament deliberately to create a new system of small farms in these days would be an anachronism and retrograde movement, not in accord with the ordinary progress of the age.

Amendment proposed, in page 10, line 18, to leave out the word "thirty," and insert the word "fifteen."—(*Sir James Fergusson.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'thirty' stand part of the Clause."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I cannot accept this Amendment at all. The Royal Commissioners, in their Report, say—

> "For the purposes of this inquiry and Report, we limit the class of crofters to tenants paying not more than £30 annual rent;"

and, no doubt, the great majority of the crofter holdings are under £30. We took the largest figure named by the Commissioners; and I would submit, though they say there should not be additional land given, that we may very well give the benefits of the Act to all who come under the definition "tenants paying not more than £30 annual rent."

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to move, in page 10, line 19, after "parish," to insert "or a tenant of a like holding whose lease has expired." The object of the Amendment is to put the Scotch crofter in exactly the same position as the Irish crofter who holds under the Act of 1881. I hold in my hand the Irish Land Act of 1881, and I find that, according to that, a lessee cannot have a fair rent, but that at the expiration of his lease he has the privilege of an ordinary tenant, and the benefits of the Act. I do hope that the Lord Advocate will put the Scotch crofter in the same position as the Irish crofter at the expiration of a lease that has come down for hundreds and thousands of years. I hope that at the end of his lease he will not be allowed to find himself in a worse position than an ordinary tenant.

Amendment proposed, in page 10, line 19, after the word "parish," to insert the words "or a tenant of a like holding whose lease has expired."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I should think that in cases where leases have been granted for "hundreds and thousands of years" these words would be hardly necessary. A person whose lease has expired is a tenant from year to year.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: If the Lord Advocate is quite clear that that is the true interpretation of the law, I am perfectly satisfied, and will withdraw the Amendment.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): The hon. Member has, I think, misunderstood the Lord Advocate. Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman say that the tenant who at the time of the passing of this Act is under a lease will, at the expiration of that lease, become what the Irish Land Act calls a present tenant?

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: He becomes a tenant from year to year.

MR. MACFARLANE: No; a present tenant. If he means that I shall be satisfied.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I do not understand that the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell) is meant to apply to the case of any person who at any future time has a lease running out. I understand that when an inquiry arises and the point comes in question, and a tenant has no lease, it will be held that he is holding from year to year.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): What is to happen to the tenant whose lease expires one year after the Act comes into operation?

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: Why, he is then no longer a leaseholder, but a yearly tenant. We must not talk about different things. If, when the question arises, the lease is still current, then it is a compact, with all the incidence of a compact, and with the right to bring it to an end; but if that contract has expired, and the tenant has become an ordinary tenant from year to year, he will, of course, be treated as such.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I have this morning received several letters with regard to this point. The people who write to me are a number of tenants whose leases are expiring, and one of them is the Secretary to the Land Law Reform Association of his parish. I have a letter from this gentleman, saying that his lease will expire next year, and that unless he agrees to take a new lease he will have to go. The Amendment of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy will put an end to that state of things. [Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: Not at all.] We must thoroughly understand this point. The landlord will give a leaseholder notice to quit at the expiration of his lease, that leaseholder will leave, his improvements will be confiscated, and he will be debarred from the privileges of this Bill.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I would point out to the Committee that, under the 39th section we are discussing, the definition of a crofter is "a tenant of a holding from year to year." Then, if we turn to the 16th section, which defines the scope of the Bill, we find—

> "This Act shall apply to every crofter who is the tenant of a holding at the passing of this Act, and to his heirs, in the same manner as if the tenancy were a lease."

Supposing a man is a tenant under a lease, he clearly is not "now" a tenant from year to year, according to the terms of this Bill, and in that way this measure differs in its application from the Irish Land Act of 1881. It was provided in the Irish Act that a tenant under a lease should, at the expiration of his lease, be deemed a present tenant. In England and Ireland, it is clear that on the expiration of a lease the tenant becomes the permissive occupant, and not a tenant from year to year, although, of course, if the landlord does anything in the way of recognizing him as such, he may become a tenant from year to year. A landlord in Ireland may let such a man remain on his holding for a time, and then summarily eject him, if he can show that he has done nothing to recognize him as a tenant from year to year.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: With us, unless notice were given the requisite period before the new year has commenced, the tenant would have become a tenant from year to year.

MR. CHANCE: The Bill, under the combined operation of the 16th and 39th sections, only extends to tenants now occupying their holdings as tenants from year to year. A person who is now a leaseholder will not come within the operation of the Act, and no future proceeding will ever bring him under the Act.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: It has been twice decided by the Committee that present leaseholders shall not come within the Act.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: There is some ambiguity about the Amendment, and I would ask leave to withdraw it, so that I may move it again in this shape—

"Or a tenant of a like holding, under an existing lease, on the expiration of his lease."

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that that Amendment would be out of Order. We have already decided against the inclusion of leaseholders.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I submit that the Committee has only decided as to the position of a leaseholder, on the expiration of his lease, as regards certain privileges.

THE CHAIRMAN: It would be impossible to insert a provision to this effect.

MR. J. E. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): Before the hon. Member withdraws his Amendment, let me point out the inconvenience which the Bill would cause without it. There are tenants holding leases, upon whom, before the expiration of those leases, notice to quit would be served. In all those cases, as I understand it, by the law of Scotland, the *status* of the tenant is exactly the same as that of tenants in England, on the expiration of their leases. He is utterly unprotected against eviction. How are you going to deal with the class who have not acquired the *status* of tenants from year to year, and who are wholly at the mercy of the landlords? I think the hon. Gentleman on the other side of the House (Sir George Campbell) should press this Amendment.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): May I point out that the proposal is to deal with a case that was not contemplated in this clause. The intention of the Bill is to deal with the cases of crofters who sit in their holdings without any legal or ordinary contract. It is not proposed to deal with such persons as, by reason of education and other circumstances, are able to look after their own interests, and have entered into certain contracts with their landlords. No doubt, if a lease expires and the person who holds it is allowed to remain on in occupation of the holding, he then becomes, by law, a leaseholder from year to year. There can be no question about that, and such a person having no contract will get the benefit of this Act. To say that the leaseholder who holds by written contract, and is therefore presumed to be able to take care of himself, should be placed in the position of a crofter in ordinary circumstances, is going altogether beyond the scope of this Bill. A leaseholder of that kind is not intended to be dealt with in this Bill at all.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member withdraw his Amendment?

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: Yes.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I should like to take up the next Amendment, to a certain extent. The clause says—

"'Crofting parish' means a parish in which there are at the commencement of this Act, or have been within *eighty years* prior thereto, holdings consisting of arable land held with a right of pasturage in common with others, &c."

Instead of the word "or," I would move that the word "and" be inserted. In this definition of the words "crofting parish," there is this defect—that provision is not made for dealing simply with parishes that have crofters in them at the present time. A careful reading of the first lines of this sub-section will show that it means that a crofting parish implies a parish where there are at the commencement of this Act, or have been within 78 or 80 years, these holdings consisting of arable land held with a right of pasturage in common with others. So that if 79 years ago these conditions prevailed, though they do not prevail now, and have not for the last 60 or 70 years, still the parish would be a crofting parish within the meaning of this Act. ["No, no."] An hon. Member says "No, no;" but I venture respectfully to differ from him, and I submit to the Lord Advocate whether this clause does not mean that a crofting parish is not necessarily one in which there are crofters at the present time, but a parish in which there were crofters 70 years ago?

Amendment proposed, in page 10, line 21, to leave out the word "or," and insert the word "and."—(*Mr. Kimber.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'or' stand part of the Clause."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): This word has been designedly introduced here, and I will state to the Committee why. A crofter, according to the provisions of this Act, need not necessarily be a person who has a share of a right of pasturage with others. If you get a parish in which there are present crofters, although there are no holdings consisting of arable land held with a right of pasturage in common with others, yet the crofter will come within the operation of this Act, and the parish will be a crofting parish. It will, therefore, be quite evident that these words are quite necessary.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. J. A. CAMPBELL (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities): I beg to move, in line 21, to leave out "eighty," for the purpose of inserting "forty." It seems to me that 80 years is a very long time over which to extend the researches as to the customs of a parish. In most cases proof of there having been common pasturage at so remote a date as 70 or 80 years ago will be of the vaguest and most uncertain kind. If the clause is allowed to stand as at present framed, I very much fear that false hopes will be held out to people, and that many disputes will be occasioned. Forty years is a term well understood in Scotland; it is, comparatively speaking, a short term, and there would not be much difficulty in ascertaining whether, during that period, the conditions mentioned in the section had existed.

Amendment proposed, in page 10, line 21, to leave out the word "eighty," and insert the word "forty."—(*Mr. J. A. Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'eighty' stand part of the Clause."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): It would be very inconvenient if this Amendment were accepted. This is not a question that has anything to do with prescription, and anyone who knows anything of the history of the Highland holdings must be aware that if you limited this period to 40 years you would not get at a large number of the worst cases. Eighty years is quite sufficient, we think, to cover all cases.

Amendment *negatived.*

MR. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I beg to move to leave out the following words:—

> "Consisting of arable land held with a right of pasturage in common with others, and in which there still are tenants of holdings from year to year, who habitually reside on their holdings."

Amendment proposed, in page 10, line 22, to leave out from the word "holdings," to the word "holdings," in line 25, inclusive.—(*Mr. M'Culloch.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I do not think this would be workable, as it would destroy the specific difference between crofters and ordinary tenants.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

On Motion of The LORD ADVOCATE, the following Amendments made:—Page 10, line 27, after "a," insert "dwelling;" after "house," insert "situated in a crofting parish."

THE CHAIRMAN called upon Mr. J. W. BARCLAY to move the next Amendment.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I wish to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate to explain his definition of the word "cottar." When he says, "who pays no rent to the landlord," what does he mean by "landlord?"

THE CHAIRMAN: I have called on the hon. Gentleman the Member for Forfarshire to move the next Amendment.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I beg to move to leave out, in line 28, the words "who pays no rent to the landlord." I wish to give the right hon. and learned Gentleman an opportunity to explain the words in the sub-section, and to get a proper definition of the word "cottar."

Amendment proposed, in page 10, line 28, to leave out the words "who pays no rent to the landlord."—(*Mr. J. W. Barclay.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR (Clackmannan, &c.): I would ask the hon. Gentleman to look at the Amendment a few lines lower down to see the definition we propose to give to the word "cottar." We propose that in the first place the cottar should be—

"The occupier of a house with or without land who pays no rent to the landlord;"

and we propose to add—

"as also the tenant from year to year of a dwelling-house situated in a crofting parish who habitually resides therein, and who pays to the landlord therefor an annual rent not exceeding six pounds in money, whether with or without garden ground, but without arable or pasture land."

In this way we shall have a better definition of "cottar" than that in the Bill as it stands. I may explain that by a cottar is meant a person who is on the land, either with the landlord's tolerance or by agreement with the landlord. But it would not include, and it is not intended to include, a person who is upon the land by some arrangement with the principal tenant to which the landlord is not a party and which may be against his contract with his tenant. It is reasonable that in cases where a landlord allows a person to reside on his land, and perhaps build a house on it, without paying rent, that that person should have the benefits of the Act; but, on the other hand, if the tenant makes a bargain with some person to which the landlord is no party, it would not be fair or right to make the landlord liable for compensation to such person. It is notorious that in the Western Highlands one of the greatest evils has been the process of sub-division and squatting on crofts. It would be unreasonable to give the benefits of the Act to a person who possibly has come upon the land with the knowledge not of the landlord, but of someone else, and possibly to the injury of the croft.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I do not think that description is correct. The right hon. and learned Gentleman assumes that the cottar who is on the land has gone there in defiance of the landlord—[Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: No; on the contrary.] I understand the right hon. and learned Gentleman to exclude the cottar from the benefits of the Act as to compensation, because he will be upon not the landlord's but the crofter's land. I asked the right hon. and learned Gentleman a question on this matter some time ago—on a previous evening. I will repeat my query; it was, Will the landlord, under this Act, be entitled to evict the cottar who has squatted on the crofter's holding, that crofter being in possession of the holding by a tenure called fixity of tenure? The crofter is the landlord for all time so long as he pays the rent; and what I want to understand from the right hon. and learned Gentleman is whether or not the cottar evicted in the way I have referred to will be entitled to compensation?

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: A person under those circumstances would not be entitled to the benefits of the Act; and I should submit that he ought not to be, because he is not on the land with the permission—either tacit or stated—of the landlord. Would it be reasonable to make the landlord or anybody else liable for compensation to a person whom he has neither tolerated on his land nor made a bargain with?

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I do not think that such a class would come under the Bill. It is well known that the vast majority of cottars do not pay rent to the landlord, but to the tenant. What does the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate mean by pretending to give certain benefits to the cottars, and then hedging the gift about in such a way that no benefit at all is conferred? Surely he means something when he speaks about doing something for the cottar. How many cottars will come under this Bill? I do not believe more than 100.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I understand the Lord Advocate to say that the presence of a cottar on a crofter's holding would be a breach of this Act. May I ask, that if such a breach would cause a forfeiture of all the benefits of the Act to the crofter, whether it is intended to make this Act an engine for the purpose of getting rid of any crofters who have cottars on their holdings?

DR. CLARK (Caithness): When a cottar is removed from his dwelling according to the 9th clause, or when he is removed from any land or buildings occupied by him in connection therewith, he is to be entitled to compensation for permanent improvements; but now you say the cottar is to be a person who pays no rent to the landlord, or a tenant from year to year of a dwelling-house situated in a crofting parish who habitually resides therein, and who pays to the landlord therefor an annual rent not exceeding £6 in money. Now we have got the cottar who pays no rent to the landlord and the cottar who does pay rent to the landlord. But there is another class of cottars whom nothing in this definition will include—who do not pay rent to the landlord, but pay rent in service to the tenant. If they are turned out, I should like to know who is to give them compensation? The Act says they are to get compensation, but it does not say who they are to get it from. I think we ought to have the clause made more clear even than it would be by the Amendment of the Lord Advocate.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I venture to think that the Committee would not wish compensation to be given to persons who were on the land without the consent of the landlord. Their only claim for compensation would in justice lie against those who allowed them to be on the land.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I should be glad to accept the view of the Lord Advocate if the class of people in question were imported on to the land; but what are the facts? As a rule, every cottar to be found squatting on property is either an evicted tenant or the descendant of an evicted tenant. He has been allowed to squat by the landlord, in order that he might avoid the necessity of turning him into a state of complete destitution. It is not accurate to say that these men are not upon the land with the tacit consent of the landlord as well as the crofter. Everyone knows that if it were not so the landlord could turn him and the crofter out. The law would assist him in doing so.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): This is a very wide definition. But there are two definitions—one is that a cottar is a man who pays, and the other that he is a man who does not pay, rent.

MR. CROMPTON (Staffordshire, Leek): I have a difficulty in understanding the definition which says that a cottar is the occupier of a house who pays no rent to the landlord. Though the Lord Advocate proposes to alter the definition originally in the Bill by the Amendment on the Paper in his name, his definition does not explain the question I ask—who is the man who does not pay rent to the landlord? It seems to me four or five classes of people come within that definition. First of all, there is the man who is allowed by the landlord to go on peaceably in a house without paying rent. He is a man who should be compensated. But, certainly, the man who is a squatter pays no rent, and the definition would entitle him to compensation. I am not quite sure whether it would not include the landlord himself, because he pays no rent. The cottar would, under this clause, be entitled to share in the benefit of extended pasturage. He is a man who pays no rent to the landlord, but to the crofter; and I should think he would be entitled to compensation. I cannot but think that this clause will be the cause of great confusion when the Act is passed if it is not made clearer. Certainly, it does not seem to be satisfactory in its present form.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I am afraid the present definition of "cottar" might refer to both crofters and cottars. A person who holds of a larger tenant is a crofter or cottar; and, according to the definition, a crofter is a man who resides on a small holding. He is also a cottar because he resides in a house and pays no rent to the landlord. There is, undoubtedly, great confusion in the definition; and I do not think that the Lord Advocate quite realizes the position of the class for whom he proposes to legislate. I should like to know whether a man who has four or five acres of land and a dwelling-house is a cottar, and whether he is not also a crofter?

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: At one time the sub-tenant was uncommon; but this applies to what is now undoubtedly a common case, and was reported to be so by the Royal Commission, of persons who are in relation with the landlord. I suggest that the matter should stand over, to see how the clause will read when reprinted in the amended form.

Mr. J. E. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): Does not the Lord Advocate see that the building is actually included, and that money will be passed to someone? Surely there will be some person to receive it, and that will be the person who built the property. I suggest that the provision of the Irish Land Act should be applied.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed,

In page 10, line 28, after the word "landlord," to insert the words "as also the tenant from year to year of a dwelling-house situated in a crofting parish who habitually resides therein, and who pays to the landlord therefor an annual rent not exceeding six pounds in money, whether with or without garden ground, but without arable or pasture land."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I think in this case that the Lord Advocate cannot be said not to include in the Act compensation with respect to leases. I propose on that account to move the omission of the words "from year to year."

The CHAIRMAN: That has already been decided.

Mr. CHANCE: I think that decision was in reference to crofters only.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I wish to point out that the definition of "cottar" would seem to cover the case of a man who holds not from the landlord, but from the farmer, who may be an intermediate lessee. If that be so, he would be entitled under Clause 9 to compensation; but it does not appear from whom that compensation is to be received. As I understand it, the cottar, as here defined, even if he be holding under a farmer as intermediate lessee, will come under the definition of a man who pays no rent to the landlord.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I think the case put by the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Kimber) does not come under the definition; but, as the point has been referred to, I shall consider it as he has suggested. My view is that the claim should not come against the landlord.

Mr. KIMBER: Do not the words "holds direct from the landlord" cover my case? You mean that the cottar must be a man who holds direct from the landlord, and yet pays no rent?

Mr. J. E. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I should say your definition ought to be wide enough to cover the case which may frequently arise of eviction of his sub-tenant by a farmer.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I suggest, for the purpose of making this definition more correct, that the word "habitually" should be left out.

Amendment proposed to the said proposed Amendment, line 3, leave out the word "habitually."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

Question proposed, "That the Amendment, as amended, be added to the Clause."

Sir JOHN RAMSDEN (York, W.R., Osgoldcross): There are many cases of persons who have houses with gardens around them, and who, although they do not occupy any pasture land, are in the habit of grazing cows on pasture land. Would they be cottars? Or are they, as it appears to me by the definition, crofters, which I think is not the intention of the Bill?

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I should think that would not vary the position at all.

Amendment, as amended, *agreed to.*

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): The Amendment relating to the definition of "fisherman" is not necessary.

Mr. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I rise to move the omission of the word "the," in line 29, on the ground that the use of the definite article would exclude every useful improvement which does not happen to be enumerated in the Schedule. This, I may point out, is one of the great defects of the Agricultural Holdings Act.

Amendment proposed, in page 10, line 29, to leave out the word "the."—(*Mr. M'Culloch.*)

Question proposed, "That the word proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I take the same view as my hon. Friend with regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act, because I entirely agree that any improvement should be paid for; but I suggest that under this Bill the Amendment of the hon. Member would be greatly at variance with the work which the Committee have already done. It has always been the custom to endeavour to define the nature of improvements. No doubt the hon. Member has in view improvements which add to the value of the holding. Does the hon. Member mean improvements which will permanently add to the value of the holding? There are several classes—liming, manuring, and so on.

MR. M'CULLOCH: I should say that all improvements are more or less permanent.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): It is of little use to speak of permanent improvements without defining under what class those improvements are to come. It would be quite a new procedure if they were not put in the Schedule, and great difficulty would arise in consequence.

MR. M'CULLOCH: I had the pleasure of being one of those first consulted when an Agricultural Holdings Bill was drafted for Scotland. If my Amendment is not agreed to, how do you propose to deal with new improvements which may hereafter be introduced?

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): Of course there are many improvements which are not permanent. Is it not the intention to compensate for such improvements?

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: The only necessity for mentioning the improvements is because we propose a much more liberal scale than that in the Act of 1873.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): We discussed this subject the other night for some hours, and the Lord Advocate agreed that other improvements should be scheduled. The right hon. and learned Gentleman said he would extend the Schedule by adding "manuring and liming;" but we have not yet any clause before us in which the Lord Advocate carries out the promise he made. Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman point out how he proposes to give compensation both for improvements which are not permanent and those which are?

Amendment *negatived.*

Amendment proposed,

In page 10, line 29, to leave out the words "specified in this Act," and insert "which add to the value of the subject, and to which the crofter shall be invested with full title and power of sale, unless he shall elect to have them valued over in manner provided in section ten of this Act: Provided always, That exception be made of those which have been executed by the landlord otherwise than in fulfilment of written agreement."—(*Mr. M'Culloch.*)

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): We cannot accept this Amendment. In this case the tenant would come under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I do not see why you should limit the operation of the Act to those who have held five years and longer than that period. There may be people who have succeeded by inheritance within the five years, and to them the Act will not apply. The words of the clause are—

> "And which has been occupied and used as arable or pasture land (whether such pasture land is held by the crofter alone, or in common with others) for a period of not less than *five years* prior to the passing of this Act."

A woman may for a year or two have held the land of her deceased husband, but under these words she will lose all the powers and benefits of the Act. The proposed limitation is contrary to every theory on which the Bill is based, and we will see if the Lord Advocate understands his own theory or not. Let us see if he will apply it in favour of the crofters.

Amendment proposed, in page 10, line 35, to leave out the words "for a period of not less than five years."—(*Dr. Clark.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR (Clackmannan, &c.): The object of putting in these words was simply to secure that a person should truly possess the character of a crofter. I have, however, no strong view in regard to them. I can quite conceive that they might work harshly, and therefore they might be left out.

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): I beg my right hon. and learned Friend's pardon. If he will look twice at the clause he will see that the words "five years" are applicable not to the tenure of a particular croft, but to the description of the ground. [Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: That was intended.] The phraseology of the clause is—

> "'Holding' means any piece of land held by a crofter, consisting of arable or pasture land, or of land partly arable and partly pasture, and which has been occupied and used as arable or pasture land (whether such pasture land is held by the crofter alone, or in common with others) for a period of not less than *five years* prior to the passing of this Act."

In point of fact, it means this—that the Act is not to apply to any piece of hill ground which has been in the occupation of a crofter. The arguments of the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) do not apply to the case at all.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: That was the intention, but subject to the criticism that it might apply to the case of somebody succeeding. I dare say my hon. Friend (Dr. Clark) will be satisfied with the assurance that the clause will not be subject to that difficulty.

DR. CLARK: Even if it were not so ambiguous, and might not be used against those who succeed to a holding, why should a man who has taken a piece of hill and has improved the land lose any right to compensation for his improvements? On what ground of equity would you take from a man who has taken land and improved it the right to compensation for his improvement? If the land was not worth 1*s*., but has been made valuable by the investment of capital and labour, why should the tenant be refused the benefit of the Act?

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): The Bill certainly ought to apply to any piece of land which has been in the occupation of the tenant. I do not see why a tenant who has improved a piece of hill should not receive the benefit of the Act.

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): May I point out to the Lord Advocate that there is great ambiguity in the clause as it stands. I need not read all the words; but the clause provides that—

> "'Holding' means any piece of land . . . . which has been occupied and used as arable or pasture land . . . . for not less than *five years*."

These words leave it quite ambiguous as to by whom the land has been occupied.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I think I should be disposed, for the present at all events, to leave out the words. The words may not be quite clear; but we can reconsider the matter before Report.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth): If these words be left out the clause will be ambiguous. The omission of these words will mean that a holding must be understood to be any piece of land which has been occupied or used for any time heretofore.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: If there was no other difficulty than that it could be got over by inserting the word "immediately." Perhaps it would be as well if I were to move to leave out "for a period of not less than *five years* prior to," in order to insert "immediately preceding."

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment proposed, in page 10, line 35, to leave out the words "for a period of not less than *five years* prior to," in order to insert the words "immediately preceding,"—(*The Lord Advocate,*)—instead thereof.

Amendment *agreed to.*

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): The definition provides that a "holding does not include garden ground only appurtenant to a house." I propose to amend the provision by inserting "or grazing" after "garden." My Amendment is intended to cover a case where a house forms the main value of the holding, but where there is a paddock or grazing land for a pony. I may say, in order to disarm opposition from hon. Gentlemen sitting below the Gangway opposite, that the class of holdings to which I refer are really not holdings of crofters at all. The holdings are those of well-to-do people, and are valued, say, at about £25 a-year. I am quite certain all the persons who occupy these holdings voted against hon. Members opposite; therefore, those hon. Gentlemen need not extend their sympathy to them. I think my Amendment gives completeness to the proposal. The second Amendment standing in my name refers to the case where the ground is partly garden and partly grazing.

Amendment proposed, in page 10, line 36, after the word "garden" to insert the words "or grazing."—(*Mr. J. P. B. Robertson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): This Amendment recalls to memory our old friend the "three acres and a cow," and I do not think it ought to be accepted. As the Bill now stands a "holding" is not to include garden ground only. If a man has garden ground only he is a cottar, if he has grazing land he is a crofter.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): It seems to me that this Amendment might give rise to the rather difficult question whether grazing was appurtenant to the house or the house appurtenant to the grazing unless there is some definition of the relative value. I quite see that a mere paddock inclosed within a hedge should not make a man a crofter.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I think that such a doubtful case might with safety be left to the Land Commission.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: Perhaps it might without this definition.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I think the two Amendments standing in the name of the Lord Advocate on page 15 of the Amendments will meet this case. If you accept the Amendment now under consideration it is quite possible that you would disqualify a large number of crofters, especially the men in Orkney and Shetland, who raise ponies and use their land for that purpose. There is a large number of people who only use their land for grazing purposes — they are fishermen and graziers combined. By this Amendment you would remove them at once from the position of crofters, and they would lose all the benefit of the Bill.

The power given to the Land Commission to determine such questions summarily will be quite suffcient to meet the case. If a man who has got grazing ground attached to his house should pose as a crofter the Land Commission may very summarily dismiss his application.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): If this Amendment were accepted this Bill would only apply to arable land, and not apply to any person except the very few crofters and cottars in the Western Highlands who have a piece of arable land.

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: Perhaps I may make a suggestion which the Lord Advocate can consider either immediately or at a later stage. I have no desire whatever to exclude persons having very small holdings—I mean holdings within the reach of real crofters. It occurs to me that one solution of the difficulty might be this—to define the house as being of a certain value, say £15. A house in the country of that value is a very good house. The clause might read—

> "Does not include garden or grazing ground only, appurtenant to a house of the value of £15."

The case I want to exclude is the case of people who, with a total holding of £20, £25, or £30, have really paid the money for the house, and who have only a small piece of ground appurtenant to the house.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: Perhaps the hon. and learned Gentleman will leave the matter over until Report.

MR. J. E. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): It is well to bear in mind that serious injury would result from this Amendment. Take the case of a small croft upon which a good house has been built by a crofter, or some person in the position of a crofter. The house would actually form the main portion of the improvements to be compensated for. The moment the value of the house rises above the garden or the appurtenant grazing, it becomes the subject-matter of the letting. I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate will strongly resist the Amendment.

Amendment *negatived.*

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): My next Amendment to the clause—that relating to the class of persons whose crofts are held by reason of some employment or office—is sufficiently met by one put down by the Lord Advocate after my Notice. My last Amendment deals with the case of mills. My impression is that there are many cases in which it would not be right to apply the provisions of the Act to mills.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I hardly think the Amendment is necessary.

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: If the right hon. and learned Gentleman does not wish it I will not press the Amendment.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): The crofter must be a legal tenant. In Ireland there has been considerable difficulty in the matter, and therefore I hope the Lord Advocate will see his way on Report to add some clause to make the point clear.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): The point raised by the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chance) is a very important one, and I trust it will receive the consideration of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate. Perhaps it is as well I should bring to the right hon. and learned Gentleman's recollection the fact that 18 months ago the hon. Member for Argyllshire (Mr. Macfarlane) introduced to him a deputation of crofters who were being evicted. The papers presented by the deputation clearly showed that some of the crofters held crofts from bog farmers. It is evident that something must be done for men in such a position.

Motion *agreed to.*

Clause 30 (Short title) *agreed to.*

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I beg to propose to insert the following new Clause after Clause 13:—

(Deduction from rent in case of lands held for sporting purposes.)

"Where a portion of any land held under lease for the purposes of a deer forest, or of a grouse moor, or for other sporting purpose, is assigned by the Land Commission for the enlargement of the holding or holdings of a crofter or crofters under this Act, the Land Commission shall, when they so assign such land, fix the amount of the deduction (if any) which in their judgment ought to be made from the rent payable by the tenant under the lease to the landlord, in respect of the portion of the land held under the same having been assigned as aforesaid, and thereafter the tenant under the lease shall be liable to the landlord only in the balance of the rent thereby stipulated, after deduction of the sum so fixed."

New Clause *brought up*, read the first and second time, and *added* to the Bill.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR moved the insertion of the following new Clause after Clause 14:—

(Bequest of holding.)

"A crofter may, by will or other testamentary writing, bequeath his right to his holding to one person, being a member of the same family, that is to say, his wife or any person who, failing nearer heirs, would succeed to him in case of intestacy (hereinafter called the 'legatee'), subject to the following provisions:—

(a.) The legatee shall intimate the testamentary bequest to the landlord or his known agent within twenty-one days after the death of the crofter, unless he is prevented by some unavoidable cause from making intimation within that time, and, in that event, he shall make intimation as soon as possible thereafter;

(b.) Intimation to the landlord or his known agent by the legatee shall import acceptance of the crofter's right to the holding by the legatee;

(c.) Within one month after intimation has been made to the landlord or his known agent, he may intimate to the legatee that he objects to receive him as crofter in the holding.

If the landlord or his known agent makes no such intimation within one month, the legatee shall come into the place of the crofter in the holding, and shall have all the rights, and be subject to all the liabilities, pertaining to the crofter therein, as from the date of the death of the deceased crofter;

(d.) If the landlord or his known agent intimates that he objects to receive the legatee as crofter in the holding, the legatee may present a petition to the sheriff, praying for decree declaring that he is the crofter therein as from the date of the death of the deceased crofter, of which petition due notice shall be given to the landlord, who may enter appearance and state his grounds of objection; and, if any reasonable ground of objection is established to the satisfaction of the sheriff, he shall declare the bequest to be null and void; but, otherwise, he shall decree and declare in terms of the prayer of the petition;

(e.) The decision of the sheriff under such petition as aforesaid shall be final;

(f.) Pending any proceedings under this section, the legatee shall have possession of the holding unless the sheriff shall otherwise direct on cause shown;

> (g.) If the legatee does not accept the bequest, or if the bequest is declared to be null and void as aforesaid, the right of the holding shall descend to the heir of the crofter, in the same manner as if the bequest had not been made."

New Clause *brought up*, and read the first and second time.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I have an Amendment to propose to this clause. The object of the Amendment is very simple; it is, if possible, to slightly extend the scope of the Act. The right hon. and learned Gentleman proposes by this new clause to give to the crofter the power to bequeath his holding. The crofter cannot sell his holding; but that is not the question I want to discuss. What I want to do is to secure that the bequest can be made to any person, whether of the same family or not. At present the power of bequest is strictly limited to persons who would otherwise be heirs. Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman tell me this. In case of a crofter's decease without testamentary bequest, will his son inherit? Suppose a testamentary deposition does not, from ignorance, or neglect, or any other cause, take place, will the dying crofter's son come in to the property? There is no provision in Bill to entitle a crofter to bequeath the holding to his family. Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman accept an Amendment in that direction?

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: Subject to proper qualifications.

Mr. MACFARLANE: I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from the word "person," in line 2, to the word "legatee," in line 13.—(*Mr. Macfarlane.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'being a member of the same family' stand part of the Clause."

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I think I can, in a very few words, show that, so far from their being any inconsistency in this provision and the others, they are entirely consistent, and are intended to confer what I believe would very often be a very considerable benefit—namely, the right of selecting a heir from a large class of persons. The hon. Member (Mr. Macfarlane) has asked what is to become of the property in case of intestacy? Undoubtedly, by the law of Scotland, it would, as real property, go to the heir. I am afraid that if this Amendment were accepted, it would not be consistent with the decision the Committee has already come to on the subject of free sale, because if there was to be bequest outside the very large group of persons—practically, the clan, who would feel themselves heirs—there would be the right to bring in strangers. We should not be doing right if we accepted this Amendment.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I believe this clause was introduced in consequence of some suggestions I made on the second reading. I should like to ask the Lord Advocate whether he has been able to give his attention to some notes I gave him, and whether the clause, in its present form, completely effects the object intended—whether there is not a case which is not provided for? I cannot say whether words necessary to cover the case should be inserted in the clause we are now discussing; but I will explain the point I have put before the Lord Advocate. Under Sub-section (c) the landlord may object to the legatee as successor, and under Sub-section (d), if the landlord objects, the legatee may present a petition and may have it adjudicated upon. But nothing is provided as to what shall take place if the legatee does not present a petition.

The CHAIRMAN: These questions will come up subsequently. The Question is, "That the words 'being a member of the same family' stand part of the Clause."

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I think we have now arrived at a contentious question which cannot possibly be disposed of within the next hour. I, therefore, move that you, Mr. Courtney, should report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Macfarlane.*)

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I hope this Motion will not be pressed. It will not take very much longer to get through the Bill. It is of very great importance, whatever view hon. Members may take of the Bill, that we should get through Committee to-night, and that the Bill, as amended, may be circulated throughout Scotland during the Recess. We shall then have the benefit of communications from all persons interested. This is one of the points I should be quite ready to take in the most informal way, and give effect to any opinion that prevails. If there is a prevalent feeling that this somewhat larger extension should be made, I certainly should not resist it. I hope we shall not be put to the trouble of a division.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I hope the hon. Gentleman the Member for Argyllshire (Mr. Macfarlane) will allow us to proceed with the Bill. I am quite satisfied Gentlemen sitting on the Opposition side of the House are anxious to support the Government as far as they can in the endeavour to finish the Committee stage to-night, which cannot last very long now. Of course I shall be prepared to deal with the Amendment when the present Motion is disposed of.

Mr. MACFARLANE: The Lord Advocate has expressed his readiness to ascertain the prevalent opinion upon this subject. It is very hard to ascertain the prevalent opinion of the Committee at 1 o'clock in the morning. It is perfectly clear this is a most contentious subject, and that much discussion must take place before justice can be done to it. I must divide the Committee on the Motion to report Progress.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I must appeal to my hon. Friend not to press the Motion. Of course, I quite agree with him that the Amendment he has moved to the new clause is one which might very fairly be accepted by the Lord Advocate.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:* — Ayes 23; Noes 161: Majority 138.—(Div. List, No. 83.)

Question again proposed, "That the words 'being a member of the same family,' stand part of the Clause."

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I should like to point out, in regard to the words the hon. Member has proposed, that, in the first place, if we adopt them we shall put the crofter in a far better position than any tenant in any part of England or Ireland; secondly, we shall be accepting a principle which we have rejected over and over again in this Committee—the principle of free sale; and, in the third place, I would point out that they are wholly antagonistic to the principle on which this Bill is founded. This Bill is based upon the hereditary principle. and it is in consequence of that that special privileges are given the crofter. Therefore, I trust that the Lord Advocate will not throw to the winds the principles which he has so often and so powerfully advocated, but will adhere to the Bill in its present shape.

Mr. MACFARLANE: The whole Bill is to give to Scotch crofters, under the special circumstances of the case, special terms which English tenants have not got. I fully understand that the Lord Advocate would personally be willing to accept the Amendment; but he has got his cue from the Co-operative Benches, and that he will therefore vote against it. If that is so I shall divide the Committee.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I think we had better settle the question at once by a division.

Mr. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): What the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. A. J. Balfour) has said with regard to what he calls the principle on which the Bill is founded, I would suggest is all nonsense.

Mr. SMALL (Down, S.): I would point out that under the Irish Act the Irist tenants enjoy an unlimited power of devise by will, and there are no more special claims in regard to Ireland. The grievances of which the crofters and the Irish tenants complain are very much the same, and I cannot see why we should make flesh of one and fish of the other. As an Irish Member, I feel bound to say that I do not see that the Irish tenants should be treated differently to the Scotch crofters.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: That would be all very well if the circumstances were the same; but they are not. There is no law of custom, or anything else—in fact, the cases are entirely different.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): Having looked somewhat carefully into the two cases, I am of opinion they are absolutely analogous,

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): The Lord Advocate was doubtful on this point before we had a division. He was anxious to take the evident sense of the Committee. There was one Member rose after that to object to the Amendment, and he at once knew what the "evident sense" of the Committee was. The opposition to this Amendment reminds me of the fact that in China if you give a proper price you can get people to commit suicide, for it appears to be the idea that if these words are passed, people will die in order to be able to dispose of their holdings.

MR. HALDANE (Haddington): Generally I find myself in accord with the Lord Advocate, and sometimes with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Manchester (Mr. A. J. Balfour); but I cannot discover any valid reasons that can be assigned in opposition to the Amendment. There seems to me to be absolutely nothing in the way of giving this right of bequest. It has nothing to do with the principle of free sale. Therefore, I shall go into the Lobby in support of the Amendment.

An hon. MEMBER: It appears to me that the introduction of this Amendment would lead to a great deal of bickering and ill-feeling on crofts between the relatives of people who might appear likely shortly to quit this life.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 94; Noes 88: Majority 6.—(Div. List, No. 84.)

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to move, Mr. Courtney, that you do now report Progress, and ask leave to sit again. It is a quarter past 1 o'clock. I make this Motion, not only for the particular reason that this is not a Bill worth sitting up for, but for the general reason that it is not conducive to the health of Members to sit up later than this.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Hunter.*)

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I think it would be advantageous, and in accordance with the general feeling of the Committee, that we should go on with the Bill in order to complete the Committee stage to-night, so that the Bill may be printed during the Easter Recess.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I hope the evident sense of the Committee will be that it is now time to go home. I have no further interest in this matter. I have moved my last Amendment, and shall take no further part in the moulding of the Bill; but it seems to me quite time that the Committee were released from its labours.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): If the hon. Member has moved his last Amendment, and intends to take no further part in dealing with the Bill, there is no reason why he should not now go home. We are just going to separate for the Easter Recess; there are only a few more Amendments, none of which are likely to take up much time, and it is most desirable that the people who will be affected by the Bill should have it placed in their hands in its amended form during the Recess, so that they can see what has been done for them. If I represented a crofter contituency I should think I was not adopting a course that would recommend itself to my constituents if I were a party to making it known to them that, on the eve of the Recess, the Bill was prevented from being sent to them in its amended form. I earnestly hope the hon. Member will withdraw his objection to the Committee being proceeded with, and allow the Bill to be completed, as it can fairly be completed, in a very short time by hon. Gentlemen who are anxious to go on with it.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Clause *agreed to.*

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member for Wandsworth move his Amendment?

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I have communicated on the subject with the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate, and he has been good enough to say that he will consider the subject on a future stage of the Bill.

Question proposed, "That the Clause be added to the Bill."

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I am in doubt about one matter. So far as I can see, the tenant remains a tenant from year to year, his rent is not to be interfered with for seven years, and he is not to be evicted unless he commits a breach of certain conditions. But I do not see anything in the Bill analogous to that in the Irish Act dealing with the matter of intestacy.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I can assure the hon. Member that there is no doubt whatever on the point of intestacy.

Mr. CHANCE: Sub-section "g" says—

> "If the legatee does not accept the bequest, or if the bequest is declared to be null and void as aforesaid, the right of the holding shall descend to the heir of the crofter, in the same manner as if the bequest had not been made."

That is not what we should call a freehold. It is really still a chattel interest.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Is it intended to give the cottar a right to compensation? If he is to have no right of bequest, what becomes of his right to compensation? Is it intended not to give him any?

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I will make a note of the point raised by the hon. Member, and will give it careful consideration.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I beg to move the insertion, in page 10, after Clause 28, of the following new Clause:—

> (Loans for the purchase and equipment of fishing boats.)
>
> "For the purpose of enabling the Fishery Board for Scotland established under 'The Fishery Board (Scotland) Act, 1882,' to make advances by way of loan to persons engaged in the prosecution of the fishing industry, whether crofters or others, in crofting parishes in all or any of the counties embraced in this Act, and abutting upon the sea, it shall be lawful for the Treasury to advance to the Fishery Board such sums as may from time to time be placed at their disposal by Parliament for the purpose.
>
> "The purposes to which the sums advanced as aforesaid shall be applied by way of loan shall be deemed to include the building, purchase, or repair of vessels, boats, and gear for fishing purposes, and any other purpose of the like nature, for the benefit or encouragement of the fishing industry within the localities above specified, which may be sanctioned by the Fishery Board, with consent of the Secretary for Scotland.
>
> "The loans in making which the said sums shall be applied, shall be made by the Fishery Board upon such terms as to repayment, security, rate, and payment of interest, and otherwise, as the Secretary for Scotland, with the consent of the Treasury, shall determine.
>
> "All moneys due in respect of loans made under this Act, may be recovered by the Fishery Board summarily, in manner provided by the Summary Jurisdiction Acts, and the secretary of the Board for the time being shall have power to sue for and recover such moneys in name of the Board.
>
> "A certificate, purporting to be signed by the chairman and secretary of the Fishery Board, stating the amount due from any person in respect of any loan made to him under this Act, together with the interest thereon, shall, until the contrary is proved, be evidence of the amount due and of the liability of the person therein named to pay the same.
>
> "If at any time while any part of a loan under this Act remains unpaid, the Fishery Board are satisfied that the borrower is not carrying into effect the undertaking for which the loan was made, they may forthwith sue for and recover summarily the loan and all moneys due by him in respect thereof.
>
> "All moneys recovered by the Fishery Board in repayment of such loans, and interest thereon, shall be paid by the Fishery Board to the account of Her Majesty's Exchequer, as the Treasury may from time to time direct.
>
> "The Fishery Board shall, in the annual report to be made by them to the Secretary for Scotland, in terms of 'The Fishery Board (Scotland) Act, 1882,' and 'The Secretary for Scotland Act, 1885,' give an account of their intromissions under this Act during the preceding year."

New Clause (Loans for the purchase and equipment of fishing boats,)—(*The Lord Advocate,*)—*brought up*, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

Mr. CRAIG-SELLAR (Lanarkshire, Partick): I have taken no action in the discussion of this Bill, because I have been anxious that the work should be left to hon. Members who have made a special study of the question. It has struck me that the most valuable thing a Member can do with a view to assist in the passing of this Bill, in which many hon. Members take an active interest, is to speak as seldom as possible. However, I feel that I must say a word or two upon this clause. In my opinion, this proposal embodies a most valuable provision; and I believe that, if the clause is added to the Bill in a generous and a liberal spirit, it will do quite as much, and perhaps more, for the benefit of the crofters than many of the clauses we have passed, and most of the Amendments we have rejected. I had intended to speak at some little length upon this subject; but at this hour I shall not detain the Committee more than a moment or two. I shall merely ask the attention of the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate to one point, and it is this. He proposes in this clause only to provide for boats and nets—that is to say, for fishing gear. Fishing gear is of great value to these people, no doubt; but I would ask of what value is it to give to such fishing crofters as those of Uist and Benbecula fishing gear when, although they may catch any quantity of fish, they cannot get them to market? What is wanted is to give these men not only the means of support by crofting and fishing, but to enable them to make such a living that they may be able to lay up some little fortune for their old age; and this can only be effected if facilities are given to enable these fishermen to send their fish to market and make some money by them. Postal and steamboat communication is a necessary accessory to supplies of fishing gear. I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate will consider this matter in connection with the proposal of the right hon. Baronet the Member for North-East Manchester (Sir James Fergusson)—namely, after "sea," in line 5, to insert—

> "Or to guarantee to Her Majesty's Postmaster General the sums necessary to provide for the conveyance of mails and of fish to market from any of such counties."

I hope that something liberal may be done in the way of extending postal and steamboat communication.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin): I must point out that the Amendment standing in the name of the right hon. Baronet the Member for North-East Manchester would not be in Order. The authority in this clause does not extend further than to loans for the purchase and equipment of fishing boats.

MR. CRAIG-SELLAR: As I am speaking upon the second reading of the clause, I thought I was entitled to go generally into these matters. Considering the enormous sums we shall be asked, under another scheme to which I must not allude, to give to the landlords in another country, it seemed to me reasonable that some adequate assistance should be extended to the class of people to whom I have referred.

THE LORD ADVOCATE: I am afraid the hon. Member who has just spoken cannot have heard my explanation as to what was being done by the Government in this matter. We have done a great deal in the way of extending telegraphic communication; a great deal has been done also in the way of improving the steamer service; and the improvements which have been effected have operated largely to the benefit of the fishermen of the Hebrides. To do what the hon. Member proposes would be to make invasions upon a fund which will all be wanted for the fishing purposes specified in the clause. We are endeavouring, through the Post Office and other Departments, to give all the facilities that are required.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): My hon. Friend and the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate have touched upon an Amendment which I was going to move, before an opportunity has been given to me for bringing it forward. I do not know whether I shall now be in Order in proposing it.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Question is, "That this Clause be read a second time."

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Question proposed, "That this Clause be added to the Bill."

DR. CLARK (Caithness): There is an Amendment to be moved, I think.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I should like to make one or two remarks as to this matter of fishing. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate says that a great deal has been done in the way of making communication more effectual between the Western Islands and the markets of the South; but I wish to say that, however much you may give the fisherman for boats and gear, it will be of no use, unless an effort is made to enable the fishermen to send their goods cheaply to market. I will give an instance of the difficulty experienced in getting any good return for the fish sent to market. Four men were engaged in fishing for four days off the Island of Barra. They got six boxes of fish sent to Glasgow where they realized £2 14*s.* The carriage came to £1 13*s.* 9*d.*, the market dues and commission to 8*s.* 9*d.*, making £2 2*s.* 6*d.*; thus leaving the four fishermen only 11*s.* 6*d.* for four days' work. Seeing that it only took a few hours to get the fish to Oban from Castle Bay, it seems to me that this sum of £1 13*s.* 9*d.* for freight was exorbitant, and steps should be taken to put matters on a fair footing.

MR. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I hope, Mr. Chairman, you will call to Order the next hon. Member who uses as an argument, either for or against anything in this Bill, the statement that a large sum of money is to be given to the tenants of Ireland.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would point out, with reference to the Motion which stands in the name of the right hon. Baronet the Member for North-East Manchester (Sir James Fergusson), that the authority to be given to this Commission to deal with money extends only to advances in the shape of loans to persons engaged in the fishing industry; therefore, this Committee has no authority to raise money for the purpose of facilitating communication.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): As it is intended that the money shall be granted by the Treasury to the Fishery Board for the purpose of being advanced for purposes of fishing, I thought that sums might be advanced by the Board to the Post Office for subsidizing steamers engaged in this traffic. Am I to understand that that is out of Order?

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin): That is out of Order.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I think the Clause might be amended on the lines suggested by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the Universities of Edinburgh and St. Andrew's (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald), so as to enable piers and harbours to be made. After "building" in the second paragraph, I would propose the addition of the words "of piers, harbours, or landing stages for fishermen." In one of the Islands in the district I represent there is no harbour or pier for the fishermen at all, and when the boats come in they often lose their fish, being unable to bring it to land. Take Stroma Island: there is a very heavy tide—a seven-knot tide—running there, there is no landing stage, and the fishermen have to jump into the water and to dance and dodge to prevent their boats from being swamped. They want a harbour or pier to enable them to land their fish.

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members wish to know whether all this is in Order. The authority given is to enable advances to be made in the shape of loans to persons engaged in the fishing industry. The clause speaks of certain individual persons — namely, fishermen; therefore, it could not possibly be extended to the building of piers.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities): I think the right hon. Gentleman will bear me out when I say that my recollection in Office was that there is a sum at present in the hands of the Fishery Board to be devoted to such purposes as the making of piers and harbours. When I was in Office, it was the intention of the Government to devote part of such sum to these purposes. It is therefore, perhaps, unnecessary to put this in the Bill.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I trust the Committee will not think me out of Order in expressing my regret that the money in this clause is to be granted for this limited purpose. I take a great interest in this matter, and have followed with a great deal of attention the efforts which have been made for the assistance of the people engaged in fishing.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must put the Question. It is, "That the Clause be added to the Bill."

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I wish to point out how deplorably we are falling short of doing a great thing for these people by limiting the grants to this very narrow purpose of fishing boats and fishing gear. The Royal Commission pointed out how, over a great part of the coast, most favourable opportunities of fishing were lost, by reason of there being no shelter for vessels capable of going out to sea. But the point I am most desirous of pressing on the Committee and Her Majesty's Government is that it is most necessary that the fish these people catch should be brought to market. I am aware that the Post Office are doing something to extend steamer communication, and that since the 1st of March steamers have been run from Oban up as far as Loch Boisdale, so as to enable fish to be brought to Billingsgate on the second morning from the departure of the boats; but it is impossible to send fish by steamer from points further north than Loch Boisdale, and a great quantity of fish, such as turbot and hallibut, are absolutely wasted. Fish of this kind, consequently, are either not caught, or if they are caught they go for nothing. If steamers, instead of stopping at Loch Boisdale, were to go round to

Portree, the fishermen would be able to send their fish by railway by way of Strome Ferry and Inverness. The same Company is willing to run steamers around the West Coast of Skye and the Island of Lewis if it is made worth its while, and I do beg the Government not to lose sight of the matter. A small guarantee of £3,000 would be quite sufficient to carry this out. Such a guarantee would enable the fishermen to turn their industry to profitable account.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I beg to move the insertion of the following new clause:—

"Nothing in this Act shall apply to any holding let to a person during his continuance in any office, appointment, or employment of the landlord, or of any tenant of the landlord."

New Clause (Saving in case of holdings in possession of servants,)—(*The Lord Advocate,*)—*brought up,* and read the first time.

Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

MR. INCE (Islington, E.): I rise for the purpose of moving, Mr. Courtney, that you do now report Progress and ask leave to sit again. There are 14 other Orders of the Day, and I think it is quite time the Government told us whether or not they are going to attempt any further Business to-night. I have no objection to Scotch Members stopping here all night if they choose; but I should like to ask whether the Government mean to attempt anything else but this Bill? Will anybody say whether they intend to take the consideration of the Infants Bill as amended?

THE LORD ADVOCATE: The Government do not propose to take any other Bills to-night. I suppose it is the Infants Bill the hon. and learned Gentleman wants to know about?

MR. INCE: Yes.

THE LORD ADVOCATE: The Government do not propose to take that Bill.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I beg to propose the following Amendment to the Lord Advocate's new clause:—

(Saving in case of holdings in possession of servants), line 3, at end, add "nor to any holding occupied by any minister, schoolmaster, innkeeper, blacksmith, carpenter, wright, builder, or shopkeeper which has been let to the tenant by reason of his carrying on such profession or trade on the property of the landlord."

The object of this Amendment is clear on the face of it, and I do not wish, at this time of night, to go into it at any length. I believe the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate knows the intention with which it is moved; and if he will give me an assurance that he will consider the matter before the Report I will not proceed further in the matter.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I will promise to do that. The matter is one which will require a great deal of consideration, for it seems to me that some part of this proposal would be very dangerous. It seems to me, it would be dangerous to leave it to the Commission to decide whether it would be to the benefit of the community that such saving should exist.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Question, "That the Clause be added to the Bill," put, and *agreed to.*

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I beg to move the insertion of the clause which stands in my name on the Paper as follows:—

"(1.) The crofter may serve upon the landlord a notice claiming to be admitted tenant of the lands, with the rights of grazing, pasturing, turf, fishing, and taking shell fish and sea weed, and at the rent therein specified, and, in case the landlord does not within fourteen days after the service of such notice serve upon the crofter a notice admitting the crofter tenant from the first term of Whitsuntide or Martinmas next succeeding such original notice of such lands, with such rights, and at such rent of, aforesaid, the crofter may apply to the Land Commission to determine whether, taking into consideration all the circumstances of the case and district, it is reasonable that the crofter should be admitted tenant of such lands, with such rights and at such rent as aforesaid, and, in case the Land Commission determine that it is reasonable that the crofter should be so admitted, the Land Commission shall pronounce an order accordingly, and shall, by such order, declare the crofter entitled to all law and other costs and expenses incurred by reason of the neglect or refusal of the landlord to admit the crofter to be tenant in accordance with the terms of his notice.

"(2.) The rights specified in the notice served by the crofter under this section may be more extensive than, or different from, the rights then held or enjoyed by the crofter.

"(3.) A notice served by the landlord admitting the crofter tenant under the provisions of this section shall have the same effect as an order pronounced by the Land Commission under the sixth section of this Act.

"(4.) Upon any application under this section, the Land Commission shall determine how far the notice served by the crofter should be complied with, and shall pronounce an order accordingly."

The clause will not extend the scope of the Bill, or give crofters any new rights whatsoever. In the case of small holdings it will be a very serious thing indeed if the crofters have to apply to a legal tribunal and bring the question at issue to a trial before they can get the slightest increase to their rights. The result will be that one or two crofters will apply to the Court, and the cost of their action will be found so great that the others will deem it wiser for them to suffer the present unsatisfactory condition of things rather than appeal to the Commissioners. We have just been told of a case in which, under the Compensation for Agricultural Improvements Act, a man applied to the Court for £80, the value of improvements, and was awarded £6, the costs amounting to £44. The first part of this clause is so worded that the landlord will be compelled to admit that the demand made by the crofter is reasonable, or else go into the Court and show that it is unreasonable, in which event the crofter will have to pay the costs. I say—

"The crofter may serve upon the landlord a notice claiming to be admitted tenant of the lands, with the rights of grazing, pasturing, turf, fishing, and taking shell fish and sea weed, and at the rent therein specified, and, in case the landlord does not within fourteen days after the service of such notice serve upon the crofter a notice admitting the crofter tenant from the first term of Whitsuntide or Martinmas next succeeding such original notice of such lands, with such rights, and at such rent of, aforesaid, the crofter may apply to the Land Commission to determine whether, taking into consideration all the circumstances of the case and district, it is reasonable that the crofter should be admitted tenant of such lands, with such rights, and at such rent as aforesaid;"

and so on. By this Amendment a tenant would anticipate this scheme, and say—"I think it reasonable that I should have certain rights," and he would get them, without the intervention of this Act or of a Court of Law, and without expense to anyone. Then, to meet the objection which might be made in connection with Section 11, I say—

"In case the Land Commission determine that it is reasonable that the crofter should be so admitted, the Land Commission shall pronounce an order accordingly, and shall, by such order, declare the crofter entitled to all law and other costs and expenses incurred by reason of the neglect or refusal of the landlord to admit the crofter to be tenant in accordance with the terms of his notice."

That is to say, instead of requiring them to apply, as under Clause 11, for additional grazing land, they may go direct to the landlord, who, if he chooses to refuse to enlarge the holding, and the Court, on application being made to them, take a contrary view, will be compelled to pay the costs. Then the next two sub-sections are complementary. I say—

"The lands and rights specified in the notice served by the crofter under this section may be more extensive than, or different from, the lands and rights then held or enjoyed by the crofter."

And Sub-section 3 reads—

"A notice served by the landlord admitting the crofter tenant under the provisions of this section shall have the same effect as an order pronounced by the Land Commission under the sixth section of this Act."

The object of that is to fix the rent for seven years, and the last sub-section deals with cases where the crofter may have made an unreasonable application, and points out where such an application has been made the Land Commission shall determine how far the notice should be complied with. The whole object of the clause is to prevent these unfortunate people from being compelled to go 20 or 30 miles to a Court and to employ a lawyer and a number of witnesses, and so on, where it is unnecessary, in order to compel the landlord to act legally. The crofters, after a few cases have been heard, will get to know what is the law; the landlords will know the same, and they will be able to avail themselves of this section, and in that way save a great deal of expense.

New Clause (Crofter may serve notice on landlord claiming to be admitted tenant,)—(*Mr. Chance,*)—*brought up*, and read the first time.

Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I am afraid that neither in substance nor in form would it be possible to accept this Amendment. It would be quite against the conception of the Bill. Without delaying the Committee, I may say that though the hon. Member's object is a good one, it would not be consistent with the remainder of the Bill to accept the proposal.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I have turned over the pages of *Hansard* for 1880 and 1881, and I find that the language I have employed was then used. I am convinced that many tenants who have a substantial claim, and who ought to have the benefit of the Irish Land Act, do not get that benefit, in consequence of the expense entailed by putting it in force. It may be that the phraseology will not meet with the approval of the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate; but I will withdraw the Amendment at once if he will undertake on Report to bring up an Amendment in the same spirit, enabling the tenant to get his rights from the landlord.

THE LORD ADVOCATE: I will yield the point of the hon. Member to the extent of considering the matter before Report.

MR. CHANCE: I understand that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate will endeavour to bring up a clause on Report that will deal with the landlord who unreasonably refuses to obey the order of the Court.

THE LORD ADVOCATE: I shall endeavour to consider the matter before Report.

Amendment *negatived.*

MR. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.), in moving the insertion of the following new Clause after Clause 14:—

"The stock upon any holding may be made a security for a loan or other valuable consideration, and the instrument creating such security, hereinafter termed a mortgage, shall be in such form as the Secretary for Scotland may prescribe, and, on the production of such instrument the sheriff clerk shall record the same in the Crofters' Holdings Book,"

said: The object of the clause I have to propose is to render operative one of the principal provisions of the Bill which gives facilities for the enlargement of holdings. This provision is fenced round with a number of restrictions, for which, when they passed through Committee, reasons more or less conclusive were assigned; and I am afraid, if the Bill stands as it is, that the provision for obtaining more land will be almost inoperative in the Highlands. I ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman to mitigate the severity of the restriction which makes it incumbent on the crofter to show that he has means to stock more land than he has. Well, Sir, I think that, in many cases, the crofter will not be able to show that he can stock more land unless the Committee comes to his aid. This Amendment, then, is to make a fund of the stock of cattle on the holding—to make it a fund of credit, which at present it is not. As lawyers are aware, it is not legal to make chattels or movable property a fund in Scotland. But I would point out that, in those countries in which similar industries to those carried on in the Highlands are most extensive and important, such as our own Colonies of Victoria and New South Wales, 25 or 30 years ago the Common Law was altered by special Statute in the direction which I now indicate, under which the Colonists were authorized to give real security over their stock; and this, I believe, is considered to have been the foundation of prosperity in those Colonies, millions of money having been lent on that security. I shall not enlarge on the subject, but shall leave the clause in the hands of the Committee; and I trust the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate will take it into consideration, because I am sure that, by agreeing to it, a great boon will be conferred upon the crofter.

New Clause (Mortgage of stock,)—(*Mr. Donald Crawford,*)—*brought up*, and read the first time.

Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): This is a matter which we have carefully considered, not only since the hon. Member placed his Amendment on the Paper, but previously. But it is only right that I should put before the Committee what appears to me to be a very serious objection to the hon. Member's proposal both in principle and in point of expediency. According to the law of Scotland, it is a well-settled and universal rule that moveable chattels, as they are called in England, cannot be made security without possession; and that rule is founded upon a consideration which I believe will be appreciated by the Committee — namely, that there should not be instruments different from other instruments before the creditors. It would be very strange if the principle were introduced for the first time into Scotland, at the same moment when the evil and difficulty resulting from a different rule of the law has been formed, and when the law in England is being gradually altered. The consequence of a different rule in England has been the raising of false credit; and it has been found very dangerous to persons who used the right of pledging their property by bills of sale. I think in the last Parliament two Bills were passed to alter and, I believe, to do away with the rule altogether. Again, in a legal sense, the security would be wholly worthless. What is the security? I can understand that it is a security in Australia, where you have many thousands of cattle and sheep in the herds, and where the deaths are compensated by a corresponding number of births. But let the Committee look at the cases to which this Amendment is intended to apply—where the stock consists of a few, or perhaps of two cows, and a death or two might discharge your security altogether. But this is to be a security which it is competent for the crofter to sell, although there is the security over it, so that it is bringing back the old Law of Hypothec—that is to say, of pledge without possession. I understand that this is a proposal to credit hypothec security without possession, on land belonging to someone else. Now that would be a very strange piece of legislation, for having done away with the Law of Hypothec in a former year we should be bringing it back in 1886. I fear that the result would be to make the people in the Highlands and Islands poorer than they are, and do them a great deal of harm. I think the Committee will pause before it accepts such an Amendment.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I wish to point out that the Royal Commission approved a scheme precisely similar to that now proposed by the hon. Member for North-East Lanarkshire (Mr. Donald Crawford). They proposed that the Government should lend the money. It should be remembered that this is a suggestion made by a practical farmer and improver of land. The system is working very well in Germany, where the result is that the occupier is able both to buy stock and to buy the holding; and if the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate will look into the plain suggestion which the Royal Commission tells us deserves the consideration of the Government; if he will look at the system in operation in Germany, and give the Scotch crofters what is there given to German peasants, I think it will have a good effect; because, unless some assistance is given in that direction, the scheme will be practically useless. In my opinion, the proposal of the hon. Member for North-East Lanarkshire is one which thoroughly deserves the support of the Committee.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I wish to point out that Sub-section 3 says that the mortgagee shall not, by reason of his mortgage, be deemed to be the owner of any such stock; and then that the 4th sub-section says that every registered mortgagee shall have power absolutely to dispose of the stock in respect of which he is registered, and to give effectual receipts to the purchaser for the price, and then that if the stock has been removed from the holding the mortgagee shall not be entitled to dispose of it. The words are without meaning.

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): This matter of raising money on farm stocks has been considered in Scotland for years, and I can only refer the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate to the Reports which have been made on the subject. I think if the principle is found to work well in new countries that the Government might very well indeed sanction this small boon to the crofters.

Mr. HALDANE (Haddington): Whatever might be the effect of introducing this system into the North of Scotland, it is certainly quite contrary to our experience here that any good should come from it. I believe it is customary, in the North of Scotland, for the banks to lend against stock. Of course, if they do that, as the law stands in Scotland, it means that they take the stock, not as security for the amount of the debt, but as an indication of the solvency of the borrower. They can do that still; but to alter the law which assumes the property to be inseparable from the possession is simply to do what we have been undoing in England. We have found that bills of sale and mortgages, under which property is separated from possession, have a most unwholesome effect. The principle advocated by the hon. Member is something quite unknown to the law of Scotland, and the proposal is hardly necessary, when you consider that the banks take stock as a sort of index of the solvency of the borrowers. It has been found in England to be a bad one, and I hope that the Committee will not sanction the introduction of the clause.

Question put, and *negatived.*

New Clause:—

(Restoration of evicted crofters.)

"On the application of any person who is, or who at any former time was, a crofter or cottar on an estate, or of the descendant or husband of a female descendant of any person who was a crofter or cottar on an estate, the Land Commission may designate any land on the same estate as suitable for being held as a croft, and may assign such land to be held as a croft by the applicant, on being satisfied that he has by himself or his family ability to cultivate the same properly, and such croft shall thereafter be deemed to be in all respects a croft within this Act, provided that the Commission shall not be bound to admit such applicant as a crofter if it shall be shown that he, or the predecessor under whom he claims, was removed from the estate for any criminal offence, poaching excepted,"—(*Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh,*)

—*brought up,* and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read the second time."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): We cannot assent to this Amendment.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): This Amendment is an attempt on the part of my hon. Friend to carry out the principle of the right hon. and learned Gentleman. My hon. Friend has drafted this as a modification—as a kind of compromise which he hoped the right hon. and learned Gentleman would accept, because it is based upon his own theory. The object is to reinstate those crofters who have been deprived unjustly of their hereditary right in the soil. There is no reason why this Bill should not extend to those who have been entitled to holdings, who have been turned out of them notwithstanding ancient law and custom.

Mr. Haldane

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I suggest an Amendment to the clause as proposed by the hon. Member—namely, to strike out the words—

"Or of the descendant or husband of a female descendant of any person who was a crofter or cottar on an estate,"

and insert—

"and was compulsorily removed from his holding."

That would certainly be a very moderate proposal, and clearly within the limits of the doctrine laid down by the right hon. and learned Gentleman.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): This is the wildest proposal I have heard of. Many years ago a crofter has been removed from his holding, no doubt for the best possible reason, but his descendant is to be reinstated.

Question put.

The Committee *divided:*—Ayes 71; Noes 91: Majority 20.—(Div. List, No. 85.)

MR. FRANK HARDCASTLE (Lancashire, S.E., Westhoughton): I beg to move the insertion of the following new clause:—

"The tenant under lease of a farm, forest, or moor, shall not be entitled to claim from the landlord as compensation for the loss of the pasture land, assigned under this Act to a crofter or crofters, anything beyond the rent agreed to be paid by such crofter or crofters in respect of the pasture land so assigned."

New Clause (Compensation to tenant limited to crofter's rent,)—(*Mr. Frank Hardcastle,*)—*brought up,* and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Clause be read a second time," put, and *negatived.*

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): On behalf of the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay), I beg to move the following new clause which stands in his name:—

"Fishermen, fish-curers, and others engaged in the fisheries shall have and exercise the free use of all ports, harbours, and foreshores, and of any waste land on the sea coast within one hundred yards of high-water mark for landing nets, casks, and other materials, utensils, and stores, and for erecting tents, huts, and stages, and for landing, pickling, curing, and reloading fish, drying nets, hauling up boats, and for other purposes connected with the catching and curing of fish without paying any charge or dues or other consideration for the use thereof:

Provided, That this Clause shall not exempt vessels or boats from the payment of such harbour or pier dues as are authorised to be levied by statute."

New Clause (To grant free use of waste land on foreshores for landing and curing fish,)—(*Mr. Hunter,*)—*brought up*, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): This is a matter which has been regulated by a somewhat obscure series of Statutes; and I rather think that a Statute of 1868, probably unintentionally, repealed certain parts, although it is not easy at the moment to say how much was repealed. I will consider the propriety of bringing in a Bill to make the re-enactment of them applicable to Scotland generally.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I beg to move the following new clause:—

"Upon any order under clause sixteen of this Act being confirmed, the Land Commission shall cause the same to be intimated to every proprietor of a holding or holdings within the district specified in the order. Every such proprietor shall be entitled, by writing under his hand delivered to the sheriff clerk within thirty days after the intimation to such proprietor, to declare his willingness to sell any holding or holdings belonging to him and included in the order. Such declaration shall be held to impart an offer to sell such holding or holdings to the occupant or occupants of the same at a sum amounting to twenty-five years' purchase of and shall be open to acceptance for sixty days from its delivery to the sheriff clerk. The price shall be payable as follows: not less than one-fifth part on acceptance of the offer, and the remaining four-fifths in portions of not less than one-twentieth each year thereof for twenty years, interest being chargeable on the portion unpaid at the rate of three and a-half per cent. per annum. The unpaid portion of the price shall form a real burden on the lands. The landlord shall have right, on failure of due payment of any instalment, to reacquire the said lands on repayment by him of the moneys paid to him."

I tried to apply the same principle to the additional land leased to the tenant, and I shall take the decision then arrived at as the decision upon this point. I do not intend to ask the Committee to divide; but I move the clause that it may be negatived, and the record remain on the Journals of the House.

New Clause (Proceedings after confirmation of order,)—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour,*)—*brought up*, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): The right hon. Gentleman does not think we could possibly accept this Amendment; it is quite plain we could not.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Schedule.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I beg to move, as an Amendment, that "planting of trees" be inserted in the Schedule.

Amendment proposed, to amend the Schedule by adding the words "planting of trees."—(*Mr. Chance.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): Yes, Mr. Courtney; I think the Amendment is quite reasonable.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Amendment proposed, to further amend the Schedule by adding the words "making piers or landing stations."—(*Mr. Chance.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

THE LORD ADVOCATE: I consider this, also, a very suitable addition.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Schedule, as amended, *agreed to.*

Preamble *agreed to.*

Bill *reported.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill, as amended, be considered upon Monday 3rd May, and be printed."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I understood it was not to be taken on the 3rd of May, but that the Business for that day was Supply.

THE LORD ADVOCATE: I do not propose to take it on the 3rd of May; but I think it is well it should be put down for that day.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: May I remind the right hon. and learned Gentleman that the Prime Minister distinctly stated, when questioned as to the course of Business, that the Business for Monday, the 3rd of May, would be Supply and the Budget Bill.

THE LORD ADVOCATE: I certainly do not propose to take it on the 3rd; I only propose to put it down for that day.

Question put, and *agreed to*.

Bill to be *printed*. [Bill 200.]

POLICE FORCES ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.—[BILL 3.]

(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Lord Claud Hamilton, Mr. Radcliffe Cooke, Mr. Cowen, Sir George Russell, Lord Charles Beresford, Mr. Howard Vincent.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping): I beg to propose that the Order be postponed until the 3rd of May.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House will, upon Monday, the 3rd day of May next, resolve itself into the said Committee."—(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson.*)

MR. PARNELL (Cork): Mr. Speaker, Progress was reported upon this Bill about a week since, and it was then put down for last Thursday. A great many of my Colleagues, at considerable inconvenience to themselves, waited here till a very late hour in order to take part in the discussion of the Bill. Without any explanation, however, being vouchsafed to the Committee, so far as I am aware, by anyone, much less by the right hon. Baronet (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson), who has charge of the Bill, it was not taken on that evening, but was put down for this evening. And now, very much to my surprise, when it has been reached again this evening, and a considerable number of my Friends and Colleagues have remained here until this advanced hour—until half-past 2 o'clock — without any information or hint whatever, until a few minutes ago, that the Bill was not to be brought on to-night, we are again told that it is proposed that the Bill shall be postponed until the 3rd of May. Now, Sir, what day is the 3rd of May? It is the day upon which the House re-assembles after the Easter Recess. It is very significant that the very day on which the House adjourns for the holidays should have been chosen for this Bill, and then, when that did not for some reason or other suit the promoters of the Bill, the very day on which the House re-assembles should have been chosen. I do not pretend to interpret the motives for these manœuvres; but they are certainly very extraordinary. I do not desire to go into the merits of this Bill—if I did, you would very properly rule me out of Order—but there is a clause in this Bill, and there is an Amendment on the Paper in reference to the Bill, in which the Irish Members are very much interested. I certainly do not think that we have been treated fairly, or candidly, first of all, in the proposition that was made to postpone the Bill until to-night, and now in the proposition to postpone it until the day after the holidays, a day on which it will be utterly impossible for my hon. Colleagues to be here to take part in the discussion, which concerns them very seriously. I do not mean to suggest that to-day was fixed with the idea that most of my hon. Friends would have returned to Ireland, or that the Motion now under consideration was also made with the idea that many of them would not have returned from Ireland. I certainly do not see why we should not go on with the Bill to-night; and if the right hon. Baronet (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson) refuses to go on with it now, I beg to move that instead of the 3rd of May, Friday, the 20th of August, be selected for the resumption of the Committee stage.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the words "Monday, the 3rd day of May next," in order to insert the words "Friday, the 20th day of August next,"—(*Mr. Parnell,*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words 'Monday, the 3rd day of May next,' stand part of the Question."

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping): I have, on more than one occasion lately, heard from the hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) insinuations as to my motives in dealing with this question. Well, Sir, I leave the hon. Member and his insinuations on one side, and will merely say that a private Member is bound, when he is in charge of a Bill, to take every opportunity that presents itself of bringing his Bill forward. That has been the only reason which has led me to place the Bill down, as the hon. Member has said, on two or three occasions. On those occasions, as on this, we have not been able to reach the Bill before a very considerable number of Members have been obliged to leave the House. To-night we have had a long and protracted discussion upon the Crofters Bill; and about half-an-hour ago it seemed to me that the hour was so late that I could hardly expect hon. Members to devote any considerable time to the discussion of the measure. Those hon. Gentlemen who are generally supposed to know what the wishes of Members of the House are told me it was too late to hope for any discussion of this question, and I at once sent to the hon. Member who, I believe, represents hon. Members below the Gangway, to say that the hour was too late, and I should not bring the Bill on. I gave him as early a notice of my intention as I gave anybody else. I decided to postpone the Bill solely in the belief that hon. Members were exhausted by the previous discussion, and that it was unreasonable to ask them to enter upon the consideration of a Bill of this kind. On my telling them that it was not my intention to bring on the Bill a number of Friends of mine left the House. Under the circumstances, I have done what I have done before, I have put it down for the first available day. It is the first time I have heard in this House that hon. Members are not expected to be present on all the days on which the House professes to meet. As I have done before, I wish to show now that I, as a private Member in charge of a Bill, am endeavouring to the best of my ability to bring that Bill before the House.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I cannot possibly see any reason why we should not proceed with the Bill now. We have waited here all this evening solely for the purpose of going on with the Bill. We have, of course, taken part in the divisions with the Scotch Members, endeavouring, so far as we could, to improve the Bill brought in on the Crofter Question; but our main reason for staying here to-night was that we are opposed to the Bill of which the right hon. Baronet (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson) has charge. Now, Sir, I have no desire whatever to cast any imputations on the right hon. Baronet. The right hon. Baronet is anxious to carry the Bill, and to carry it in the form which he thinks is most for the interest of his Party. He finds here to-night a considerable number of Irish Members ready to take part in the discussion of that portion of the Bill which concerns them. Perhaps he finds a fewer number of Members of his own Party present, and, accordingly, the right hon. Baronet proposes to defer the Bill to a time when the Irish Members cannot be here. It is all very well to say hon. Members are expected to be here on every day that the House sits. That, of course, is the theory; but there are days when it is convenient for hon. Members of one section of the House to be absent, and there are days when it is convenient for hon. Members of another section of the House to stay away. I put it to the fairness and justice of the House whether, when we have come to the Irish portion of the Bill, it is right for the right hon. Baronet to postpone the Bill from the night when there is a large attendance of Irish Members to a day when there must be a small attendance of such Members? It is contrary to all the good faith and fair dealing which hon. Members of different sections of the House must observe towards each other if the Business is to proceed smoothly. The right hon. Baronet has got his opportunity. He professes to be extremely anxious that this Bill should go forward, and his excuse for putting it down for the 3rd of May is that it is the duty of a private Member in charge of a Bill to press the Bill forward as best he can. Then let him press it forward now. I ask hon. Members on all sides of the House to support us in our attempt to defeat what my hon. Friend (Mr. Parnell) was perfectly justified in calling the manœuvring in connection with this Bill.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I rise to Order. Is it right, Mr. Speaker, for an hon. Member to apply the term "manœuvring" to the action of another hon. Member of the House?

MR. SPEAKER: The word "manœuvring" is certainly not out of Order; but it would be out of Order to impute to an hon. Member any unfair motive.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR. I attribute no unfair motive. I impute to the right hon. Baronet (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson) a motive he has, in common with every strong Party man, of putting forward a Bill in such a manner as would please himself, and would be hostile to those against it; and I say, in that sense, he is manœuvring most skilfully. Now, what are the two proposals before the House? The right hon. Baronet has his opportunity of hurrying forward the Bill by proceeding with it now; but he prefers to postpone it to a day which will be most inconvenient to those hon. Members who are most deeply interested. I think that, under these circumstances, we are entitled to ask the House to postpone the Bill until the 20th of August, when we may have a better chance of considering the measure.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I cannot help sympathizing, to a certain extent, with hon. Gentlemen from Ireland in their desire to proceed with the discussion of this Bill, in which they are so much interested, to-night; but I think that we, who are not so interested as they are, and who have been working all night long, ought to be now relieved from further attendance. No one can really think the right hon. Baronet (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson) is guilty of any unworthy motive. But I may venture to suggest, as a compromise, that he should postpone the Bill until Thursday, May 6. If it is put forward to the 6th, probably hon. Members from Ireland will be in their places by that time, and will be able to take part in the discussion.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I regret to say that the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland will not meet our objection. Our position is a simple one. We might have blocked this Bill; but we did not wish to do so. We allowed it to come on, in the hope that the right hon. Baronet would meet us in regard to the time when it should be taken. It affects Ireland very largely, and we are surely entitled to a fair opportunity of discussing it. Now, Sir, observe what our position is. Many of us would have been able to have gone to Ireland on Saturday but for this Bill being down for to-night, and we have accordingly been kept in town waiting for it for three days. Well, we do not object to that; but now we are asked to come back here again, in order to discuss this Bill, a week before there is any other Irish Business, or any necessity for us to come back. We have no other Business to call us here, and yet this Bill is put down. I do not wish to impute unworthy motive to the right hon. Baronet; but I do not know why he should make such a Motion as this, unless it is to get this Bill through. Of course, it may be a very worthy motive for the right hon. Baronet to desire, by any means whatever, to get his Bill through; but I only wish to point out that he is treating the Irish Members very unfairly in the matter. I would point out to him also that even the Government, when we have been opposing them very bitterly upon questions like the Irish Estimates, have endeavoured to meet our reasonable convenience. If any Member of the Irish Party said that it would be inconvenient to the Irish Party to take the Irish Estimates on any particular night, the Government have always been willing to put them down for some other day. I fail to see why it should be fair or reasonable for a private Member in this House to persue a course which, although he has an interest in the Bill, and however anxious he may be to get it through, is unfair to one class of Members, and is more arbitrary than the course pursued on similar occasions by the Government.

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON: I have no right to speak again; but if the House will allow me I wish to say, after what has fallen from the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley), I shall be glad to put the Bill down for the Thursday or the Monday following the day on which the House reassembles.

Question put, and *negatived.*

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON: I allowed the Question to be negatived, in order to fulfil the understanding that I had with hon. Members; and I will now move to insert "the 10th of May."

MR. PARNELL: It ought to have been obvious to the right hon. Baronet——

MR. SPEAKER: The Amendment of the right hon. Baronet can only be inserted in the event of the proposition which I have now to put being negatived.

Question put, "That the words 'Friday, the 20th day of August next,' be there inserted."

The House *divided*:—Ayes 80; Noes 77: Majority 3.—(Div. List, No. 86.)

Main Question, as amended, put.

Committee *deferred* till *Friday* 20th August.

MOTIONS.

TRAMWAYS PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 1) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Charles Acland, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under "The Tramways Act, 1870," relating to Dudley, Stourbridge, and Kingswinford Tramways; Great Grimsby Street Tramways (Cleethorpes Extension); Halifax and District Tramways; Jarrow and Hebburn and District Tramways; and North Staffordshire Tramways, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Charles Acland and Mr. Mundella.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 195.]

GAS PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 1) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Charles Acland, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under "The Gas and Water Works Facilities Act, 1870," relating to Chertsey Gas, Loughborough Gas, Melksham Gas, Menai Bridge Gas, and Pocklington Gas, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Charles Acland and Mr. Mundella.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 196.]

POLICE AND IMPROVEMENT (SCOTLAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (LEITH) BILL.

On Motion of The Lord Advocate, Bill to confirm an Order of the Secretary for Scotland under the provisions of "The General Police and Improvement (Scotland) Act, 1862," relating to the Burgh of Leith, *ordered* to be brought in by the Lord Advocate and Mr. Mundella.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 197.]

ADJOURNMENT.

Resolved, That this House will, at the rising of the House this day, adjourn till *Monday* 3rd May.

House adjourned at a quarter after Three o'clock till Monday 3rd May.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 3rd May, 1886.

MINUTES.]—NEW MEMBERS SWORN—Right honble. George Shaw Lefevre, *for* Bradford (Central Division); Right honble. Sir Ughtred James Kay-Shuttleworth, baronet, *for* North-East Lancashire (Clitheroe Division); Hugo Richard Charteris, commonly called Lord Elcho, for Ipswich.

SUPPLY—*considered in Committee*—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES; CLASS I.—PUBLIC WORKS AND BUILDINGS, Votes 15*a* to 20, 23 & 24; CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE, Votes 1 to 19, 22, 23, 31 & 32

PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*) — *Second Reading*— South Hampshire Railway and Pier.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*Resolution in Committee*—Post Offic Sites [Expenses].

Ordered — *First Reading* — Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders * [201].

Second Reading—Local Government Provisional Orders * [173]; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) * [174]; Local Government Provisional Order (Poor Law) * [172]; Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law (No. 2) * [175]; Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 3) * [176]; Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 4) * [177]; Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 5) * [178]; Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 6) * [179]; Customs and Inland Revenue [190]; National Debt * [191]; Medical Acts Amendment [163]; Ulster Canal and Tyrone Navigation [141]; Burial Grounds [131]; Returning Officers' Charges (Scotland) [188].

Committee — *Report* — *Third Reading* — Hyde Park Corner (New Streets) (*re-comm.*) * [182], and *passed*.

Considered as amended—Infants [139].

Withdrawn—Removal Terms (Burghs) (Scotland) Act (1881) Amendment * [105].

QUESTIONS.

POST OFFICE (SCOTLAND)—DELIVERIES OF MAILS TO PORTREE.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the Post Office Authorities have received complaints regarding the deliveries of mails to Portree; and, whether a daily post by steamer can be granted during the winter as is done in the summer months?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): Representations have, from time to time, been received from Portree respecting the convenience that would be afforded if the steam packet from Strome could run six days a-week throughout the year, instead of six days a-week in summer only and three days a-week at other seasons. A more frequent service in winter is not, however, required for ordinary traffic, and extra trips for mail purposes alone would involve a very large additional outlay, which would not be warranted. In winter, when the steam packet runs only three days a-week, the Mails are sent on the alternate days by Kyleakin

Ferry and overland; and, having regard to the amount of correspondence affected, the service afforded to Skye, taken as a whole, cannot be considered unsatisfactory.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—STATISTICS OF "BOYCOTTING."

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in reference to the 900 persons stated to be either wholly or partially boycotted in Ireland, If he could inform the House in what proportion this 900 should be divided between the four provinces of Munster, Ulster, Connaught, and Leinster?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I find that of the 900 cases referred to 67 belonged to Ulster, 93 to Connaught, 272 to Leinster, and 468 to Munster.

LICENSING LAWS—LICENSING OF CLUBS.

MR. AGG-GARDNER (Cheltenham) (for Sir EDMUND LECHMERE) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, looking to the falling off the Revenue arising from the Excise, he will place political and private clubs upon the same footing, in reference to the Excise, as public houses?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby), in reply, said, that the falling-off in the Excise Revenue had arisen from a smaller comsumption of alcoholic drinks, and not from the slight decrease which had taken place in the issue of licences. As to the putting on of additional licences, as suggested in the hon. Gentleman's Question, whatever other effect it might have, it would not tend to increase the consumption of alcoholic drinks, which, whatever else might be the case, would be that which would increase the Revenue.

POST OFFICE—OUTWARD AMERICAN MAILS.

MR. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, What answer has been sent by the Postmaster General to a Letter addressed to him by the Right Honourable W. E. Baxter, as published in *The Times* newspaper, on the subject of the outward American Mails; and, whether any steps have yet been taken to effect the much needed improvement in that important Mail Service?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): I can only say, in reply to the Question of the hon. Member, that the subject to which he refers is receiving the careful consideration both of the Postmaster General and of the Treasury.

PARLIAMENT — BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. SEXTON (Sligo, S.) requested the Secretary to the Treasury, seeing that most of the Irish Members were absent, to postpone any Irish Votes which might be reached to-night.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.) said, he would be willing to postpone any contentious Irish Votes which might be reached.

SIR ROBERT PEEL (Blackburn) asked that the Vote relating to Dover Harbour should not be taken to-night, owing to the absence of many hon. Members interested.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER observed, that he could scarcely consent to the request of the right hon. Baronet, when there had been a fortnight's Notice that this Vote would be taken. It had always been the custom of his Predecessors to take, if possible, all the Irish Votes together when the Irish Members could attend.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine) joined in the appeal to postpone the Dover Vote.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) asked what was to be done with the Crofters Bill, Report on which was the 12th Order to-night?

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER presumed, as the Lord Advocate was not present, the Bill must be postponed.

SIR WALTER B. BARTTELOT (Sussex, North West) asked what would be the Business for Thursday?

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire) suggested that the Crofters Bill should be put down as the first Order on Thursday.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby) said, the Business for Thursday would be either the Crofters Bill or the Railway Rates Bill; but he did not like to speak positively, as the Paime Minister did not return until to-morrow. They could, however, put down both Bills.

Sir WALTER B. BARTTELOT though the Railway Rates Bill should not be put down if it was not to be taken.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: Then we will say we will take the Railway Rates Bill.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

Supply—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Class I. — Public Works and Buildings.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a sum, not exceeding £800, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for constructing a new Harbour at Dover."

Mr. RYLANDS (Burnley): I rise for the purpose of expressing my great surprise, and at the same time my great disappointment, at the answer given by my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) to the Question put to him a short time ago by the right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir Robert Peel). When this Vote was before the Committee on a previous occasion it came on at a late hour, and upon the Vote being proposed from the Chair I moved to report Progress, on the ground that the House at that time could not be expected to deal with advantage with a question which involved in principle the expenditure of an enormous sum of money. Certainly I did not expect on the first day of the reassembling of the House after the Recess, and when, as every hon. Member will see, the Committee is very sparsely attended—I did not expect to find that the Vote for Dover Harbour would be submitted—a Vote which really involves a very large expenditure indeed. [Mr. Henry H. Fowler (Wolverhampton, E.): No.] My hon. Friend says "No;" but it certainly is a Vote which involves in principle the expenditure of an enormous sum of money, and I maintain that it ought not to be asked for in a thin House, and suddenly, when there was no expectation that the Government would attempt to bring on such serious contentious Business as is comprised within this Vote. I may point out to my hon. Friend that the Government have already omitted one Vote in Class I.; and I think that a similar course ought to have been followed in regard to this Vote, so that it might receive full and adequate discussion. The Vote in Class I., which has already been postponed, has reference to the new buildings for the Admiralty and the War Office. The Government would have been fully justified in postponing this Vote also, because they must be fully aware that every argument against discussing the Vote for the Admiralty and War Office buildings now applies equally to the discussion of the Vote for Dover Harbour. My hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury interrupted me a short time ago in order to dispute my statement that the present Vote involves in principle the expenditure of an enormous sum of money. I am quite sure that my hon. Friend would not have dissented from what I was saying unless he himself entertained the opinion that the adoption of the Vote would not commit the House of Commons to a further large expenditure. I do not know how far I express the views of the right hon. Baronet opposite; but my feeling certainly is that we are being led on from one step to another. In the last Parliament we were induced, without sufficient consideration, in a Committee which did not appear to be very anxious to promote economy, by the influence of my right hon. Friend the then Home Secretary (Sir William Harcourt), whose power of persuasion is well known to hon. Members, to agree to a Vote which involved a very large expenditure for the erection of a convict prison in Dover. We now find that because that Vote in the last Parliament was passed without due consideration, and with scarcely any discussion — [Sir William Harcourt (Derby): No.] At any rate it was very carelessly considered by the Committee in the last Parliament; and we are now asked, because the last Parliament was unwise enough, or so inconsiderate, as to enter into a large expenditure for the erection of a convict prison at Dover, to take another step, and to vote a further sum for the purpose of preparing plans and obtaining the information that is necessary in order to enable the Government to construct, at enormous expense, a new harbour at Dover. All I can say is that, personally, I am strongly opposed to the taking of any step which may commit the House of Commons in any way whatever to the cost of constructing a new harbour at Dover until we have had a full and ample discussion of the question. Every hon. Gentleman who has any knowledge of the subject must be aware that if we do commit ourselves to this expenditure, it means an ultimate outlay of from £1,500,000 to £2,000,000, for objects in regard to the utility of which there is some very serious question indeed. Therefore, my feeling is to oppose this Vote, unless my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury is able, from some new light, which I cannot anticipate, to defend and justify it. In the absence of a full and satisfactory explanation from the Government, I shall certainly trouble the Committee to divide against the Vote.

Sir ROBERT PEEL (Blackburn): I feel compelled to follow my hon. Friend in the objections which he has raised to this Vote, and in the appeal which he has made to the Secretary to the Treasury to postpone the consideration of it until a better opportunity can be afforded for full discussion. Without entering into the general question, I wish to put to the Committee one point—namely, that when the debate on this subject was postponed in the early part of March, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary to the Treasury both admitted that it was a question of very great importance; and so strong was the feeling of the Committee at that moment, that if on the 2nd of March a division had been taken the Government would in all probability have been beaten. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in acknowledging that it was a matter of very great importance, intimated that the Government, while postponing the Vote then, and agreeing to report Progress, would be prepared on a subsequent day to lay their whole plan before Parliament, in order that the country may be able to judge of the position of affairs with respect to this harbour. We are now anxiously waiting for the promised explanation of the Government; but I wish to follow what my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury said just now. He remarked, in reply to a Question put to him, that by agreeing to this small expenditure of £800, in addition to the sum of £200 already voted on account, the Committee and the House of Commons, Parliament and the country, would be pledging themselves to nothing. Now, this is not the occasion, I venture humbly to submit, when the House of Commons should consent to follow the course they are invited to take. We have over and over again, in my long experience of the House of Commons, by voting such small sums in Committee of Supply as that now asked for, found ourselves drawn on and committed, in the end, to the principle of sanctioning a very much larger expenditure. On more than one occasion we have been told that by taking such a course we have pledged the House of Commons to a particular scheme. We are now asked to vote £800 to complete a sum of £1,000 for plans and information in connection with the construction of a new harbour at Dover. We were asked last year to vote £16,000 for Peterhead Harbour. That sum of £16,000 involved the agreement of Parliament and the country to a very large expenditure, amounting, in all probability, to considerably more than £500,000. Although it is admitted that the harbour itself is not proposed to be constructed in the best position that could have been selected on the East Coast of Scotland it will probably cost from £750,000 to £1,000,000 before it is completed. Some reference was made the other day to the harbour at Boulogne. I only mention that harbour now to show how a country may be drawn into a large outlay, in the end, by the gradual expenditure of small sums of money at the commencement. It was stated, in the first instance, that Boulogne Harbour would not cost more than 16,000,000*f.*—the estimate for it, I believe, was 15,000,000*f.* It has cost something like 17,000,000*f.* already, and the estimate for the completion of the harbour amounts to something like 32,000,000*f.* Then, again, take the case of Alderney Harbour. I have been long enough in this House to recollect the debates which took place in reference to that harbour. Hundreds of thousands of pounds have been thrown away upon

Alderney, and it was well known before the expenditure was commenced that it was impossible to construct a harbour there on account of the strong current of tide which prevailed off that Island. I wish now to ask the Secretary to the Treasury when he proposes to make the statement which the Government are pledged to make in reference to this Vote? I would ask him why he cannot postpone the Vote? I had certainly hoped that the hon. Gentleman would have taken that course, seeing that this is the very first evening of the re-assembling of the House after the Recess, and that the House is not as full as it might have been, as it ought to have been, and as it undoubtedly would have been, if it had been known that this question was coming on. If the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury will not undertake to postpone the Vote I will ask him if he will now, at all events, make a full and explicit statement of the plans the Government propose to undertake, the arrangements they propose to adopt, and what he believes will be the full amount of expenditure upon works in connection with the construction of this commercial harbour at Dover? There is not a sailor in this country who believes that it will be of the slightest use to Her Majesty's ships. No ship would take advantage of that narrow channel. No iron-clad would attempt to sneak or creep into a harbour of refuge at Dover where the Channel is so narrow and the tides are so short. I appeal, then, to the hon. Gentleman if he cannot postpone the Vote now, to make a clean breast of it at once, and to tell the Committee what is proposed to be done and what is the amount of expenditure he expects the country will be called upon to incur in order to carry out this large undertaking.

MR. BAKER (Somerset, Frome): I wish to point out that some time ago there was a small Vote—I think of £300—which was passed after a short controversy as a preliminary Vote for plans. At that time there was a clear undertaking, as I think, from the Government that before any further sum was asked for on account of Dover Harbour there should be a full discussion upon the scheme, on which occasion we were to be told what the whole amount of the expenditure would be. It must be borne in mind that there are a considerable number of new Members in the House who are altogether unacquainted with the previous history of this harbour, but who know very well how large amounts of money are ultimately swallowed up when a first beginning is made in this way. Before the Committee can accept this Vote I think Her Majesty's Government should give a pledge that information of a very full and explicit character should be given.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby): I am, perhaps, more responsible than anybody else for this Vote; and therefore I may be allowed to answer the observations which have been made. I cannot agree with the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands) that this matter was not fully discussed in the last Parliament. As a matter of fact, there was a long discussion upon certain Papers which were placed upon the Table in reference to Dover Harbour, and the reasons why Dover had been selected for the construction of a harbour of refuge in preference to Filey were fully explained. The reason why this Vote is taken now is because the works at Portsmouth and Chatham have been brought to a close, and a harbour being wanted on the East Coast we had to consider where the convict labour could be most advantageously employed. Dover has been fixed upon as the place most appropriate for the employment of convicts. Therefore, employment being wanted for the convicts and a harbour being very much required on the East Coast we combined the two requirements, and have fixed upon Dover for the employment of those convicts who need employment. It was upon that ground that a Vote has already been taken for the erection of the convict prison at Dover, which is already in course of construction. It was thoroughly understood, when that Vote was passed, that considerable time would elapse before the prison was completed, and the present Vote is really for the purpose of obtaining information in regard to the site for the harbour. Pains will be taken to examine the site in order to ascertain the nature of the works which will be necessary. Several schemes for the construction of a harbour have been proposed, some of which would, if carried out, involve a much larger expenditure than others. Consequently it is impossible, without a careful engineering examination on the spot, to determine which of the sites should be selected, and which of the proposed plans should be proceeded with. This Vote is really for the sole purpose of obtaining that information. The hon. Member for Frome (Mr. Baker) asks what is the meaning of this Vote, in addition to the sum of £300 taken some weeks ago. Now the Vote of £300 referred to by the hon. Member belongs to exactly the same class of Vote as the present one; but it has been applied only to the concluding months of the preceding financial year. This Vote is for the purpose of continuing those experiments and examinations which everybody knows must be made in connection with works of this kind. The Vote has nothing to do with the works of the harbour itself; it is exclusively confined to the preliminary examinations which are necessary to ascertain what would be the cost of carrying out any of the proposals and plans which have been submitted. It is quite impossible that the information which the right hon. Baronet (Sir Robert Peel) and other hon. Members desire on this subject can be obtained unless this examination is made, and I hope that the right hon. Baronet and hon. Members will accept the assurance that this Vote, like that which was taken some weeks ago, is a Vote for preliminary examination only.

SIR ROBERT PEEL (Blackburn): The words of the Vote are "towards the expenses of constructing a new harbour at Dover."

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that this is the fact, and that this Vote is precisely of an analogous character to that which was passed some weeks ago, and is only for obtaining preliminary examinations as to the plan which it may be most desirable to carry out. The right hon. Baronet will find upon page 54 of the Estimates a footnote at the bottom of the page, which gives details in connection with preliminary works for Dover Harbour—such as—

> "Surveying Site and taking trial borings under water, making inquiries and negotiations for Site, for obtaining Gravel and Sand for Works," &c.

I can assure the Committee that this Vote is solely required for the preliminary examinations as to the site. In order to show that that is so, I may tell the right hon. Baronet that the actual plan of the harbour is not yet settled, and that it is absolutely necessary to make a careful examination of the ground before any such plan can be settled. It will be just as impossible to decide upon a plan until there had been a preliminary examination, as it would be for a man to jump into the water and swim without having been taught the art of swimming. What we require, in the first instance, before consenting to any plan or Estimate of expenditure, is to have a careful survey of this character made, without which no real work of a practical nature can be undertaken. I hope that hon. Members will be satisfied with this explanation, and will allow the Vote to pass.

SIR HENRY HOLLAND (Hampstead): I quite admit the force of what the right hon. Gentleman has stated, and I perceive that in addition to the note upon page 54, which the right hon. Gentleman has read, there is this further note—

> "The plan of the works to be undertaken not being settled, an estimate of the total cost cannot yet be made."

I wish to know if this is the last sum which will be wanted for preliminary examinations. We have already voted one sum on account, and we are now asked to vote £800 in addition. I desire to have some assurance that this will be the last sum we shall be called upon to vote for preliminary inquiries.

SIR WALTER B. BARTTELOT: Sussex, North West): I certainly should not be satified with the slight assurance asked by my right hon. Friend below me (Sir Henry Holland). I should like to know what the grounds were upon which the Government decided upon removing the convicts from Portsmouth and Chatham to Dover, and upon constructing a prison for them there, unless it was to construct a large and sufficient harbour; but it seems now such was not the case. It appears, therefore, anomalous to construct barracks for the reception of convicts before it has been settled that a harbour is to be constructed. Her Majesty's Government asked, in the first instance, that there should be a considerable grant of money for building a prison for convicts at Dover. If I recollect the debate which took place on that very important question, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), who was then President of the Board of Trade, stated distinctly that it was to be a commercial harbour; that a large sum of money would be found by a Company; and that probably some little alterations would be required in the Admiralty Pier. We all know what that Admiralty Pier cost; but we were never led at that time to believe that an enormous sum of money was going to be expended out of the taxation of the people of the United Kingdom for the purpose of constructing a new harbour.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): That is not the case as far as this Vote is concerned.

SIR WALTER B. BARTTELOT: The hon. Gentleman says that is not so; but, as far as I recollect, it is absolutely so. The Government have already determined that they will build a barrack for the accommodation of convicts at Dover, and we are now told that they decided upon taking that step before they took the trouble to find out whether it is desirable to have a harbour there or not. If a harbour is to be erected there, it must necessarily be one capable of affording accommodation for very large ships; and, in addition to being a harbour for large ships of war, there ought to be a commercial harbour combined with it.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: There is a Paper on the Table of the House giving plans of the "harbour" and the number of ships it will hold, together with the moorings for them. That Paper can be seen in the Library, and also a rough estimate of the cost of each of the plans which have been submitted.

SIR WALTER B. BARTTELOT: If I recollect aright one plan proposes that the harbour should cover 150 acres of water.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine): 150 acres of deep water.

SIR WALTER B. BARTTELOT: No; altogether, if I recollect rightly; and there was some doubt as to whether it would be possible to obtain all the accommodation that was required. Certainly it will cost a very enormous sum to make a harbour of this character; and all I want to know is what the Government intend to commit the House to? I understand it is proposed to throw out a wall of nearly a mile in length towards the coast of France. All I ask is that before the House of Commons is committed to any particular scheme, or the expenditure of any large sum of money is undertaken, we shall have some authoritative statement that the harbour, when constructed, will be of use not only to the Navy, but also for commercial purposes. For these reasons I think we ought to have some more explicit information from the Government than we have yet received. I do not say that I will vote against this sum of money being granted if we have good reasons for granting it; but, at the same time, I do not like to commit myself even to such a small sum as this until I know what other sum is likely to be asked for.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine): I certainly hope that the Committee will not agree to the Vote, because I believe that it will only be the beginning of an enormous expenditure. We have been told that the cost of constructing a harbour at Dover would be something like £1,100,000; but from all the information which I have been able to obtain I am induced to believe that it will cost at least £2,000,000. In its proposed form the area of the harbour is small, and wholly insufficient for receiving large vessels of war. The construction of a harbour was recommended in 1844 and 1846; and on the action of Sir Robert Peel, then First Lord of the Treasury, several eminent engineers, nine in number, were employed to obtain information, and they prepared estimates and plans, one of which put the cost at £4,000,000, and another at £1,100,000, and the other seven engineers varied between these sums. That wide margin shows the difficulty which exists in preparing an estimate for works of much magnitude. Indeed, it is almost impossible for an engineer to say what the amount of the expenditure will be. These plans, estimates, and Reports are in the Library of the House; and an examination thereof will conclusively show that the Government prudently gave up this great project. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has told us this Vote is only for preliminary information and examination. But I must point out that we have full information available in the

Library as to the soil, tides, and depth of water of Dover Bay. We have already had a sum of money voted in March last; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer then informed us that that Vote would not pledge the House of Commons to any plan for the construction of a harbour at Dover. But every additional sum is used as a plea for going on with the works. But I should like to remind the Chancellor of the Exchequer of what occurred in July, 1873. A Vote was then taken for £10,000 in connection with the preliminary expenses; and though the Vote was passed by only 61 for it and 60 against it, yet the Government proceeded with the project. Since then the present Chancellor of the Exchequer obtained a grant for a building for the reception of the convicts who were to be employed at Dover. It is the Liberal, and not the Conservative, Party who urges on this vast scheme, mainly at the dictation of Lord Granville, who is Chairman of the Dover Harbour Board. After the Conservative Party dropped the project in 1875, then, in 1878, Earl Granville brought forward the question of Dover Harbour in the House of Lords; and I would ask hon. Members to read the debate which took place on that occasion, in order that they may know how useless and unnecessary it is to construct a harbour at all. I particularly refer to the masterly speech of Lord Beaconsfield as unanswerable.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): There are two questions raised by this Vote, one of which I think might be withdrawn altogether from the consideration of the Committee. The Vote purports to be a Vote towards the expense of constructing a new harbour at Dover; but I understand the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that that is not the object of the Vote at all. The object is governed by the foot note at the bottom of the Estimate, which states that the money is required for—

"Surveying Site and taking trial borings under water; making negotiations for Site, for obtaining Gravel and Sand for Works," &c.

Under these circumstances, I would suggest that it might be possible to amend the words of the Vote so that the Committee might not bind themselves to the construction of a harbour there, in which case it will not be necessary to devote any length of time to the discussion of the present Vote. I would suggest that it should be made quite clear that the Vote is for the expenses of a preliminary survey of the site for the projected new harbour. I should certainly vote against any proposal which would commit the House of Commons to an enormous expenditure, without our knowing what that expenditure is to be, and having plans of the works before us. At the same time, if it is made clear that the Vote is only for the expenses of a preliminary survey the demand made upon the Committee may be perfectly reasonable.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I am quite ready to alter the words of the Vote, so as to make it appear that the Vote itself is limited to a preliminary survey with respect to the harbour at Dover. If that can be done I am quite willing to accept such a limitation of the Vote.

THE CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) bring up his words?

MR. BRADLAUGH: The words I suggest are these—

"Towards the expenses of a preliminary survey of the site for the projected new harbour at Dover."

Amendment proposed,

To leave out the words "for constructing a," in order to insert the words "towards the expense of the preliminary Survey for the site for a projected,"—(*Mr. Bradlaugh,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): I wish to ask if it is in accordance with the practice of Committee of Supply for any private Member to move an Amendment in a Supply Resolution proposed by the Government of the day? I do not know what the practice is; but I have no recollection of any such Amendment having been proposed, and I am under the impression that the only Amendment which can be moved is to reduce the Vote. I should like to point out what this comes to. The Government have asked for a Vote of money for a certain purpose, and the Vote is asked for on the responsibility of the Government. Is it competent, then, for any hon. Member to get up and say that the House of Commons will not grant the money for the purpose for which it is asked, but that it will grant it for another purpose? That appears to me to be a precedent which, as far as I know, is now proposed to be set for the first time. I would suggest that if the Government desire to alter their proposal in the direction suggested by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) it would be better that they should withdraw the Vote for the present, and should bring it forward in another form on a future occasion, thereby avoiding the inconvenient results which might follow on a future occasion from their having assented to a Government Vote in Committee of Supply being altered on the Motion of a private Member.

SIR ROBERT PEEL (Blackburn): I also rise for the purpose of pointing out the inconvenience that would arise if we were to accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh), and were to alter the Vote in the way in which it has been proposed. It is quite clear that according to the heading of the Vote it is for the purpose of constructing a new harbour at Dover; although, of course, I accept the explanation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that that is not the case, and that the £800 is to be applied merely for the purpose of defraying the expense of making preliminary surveys in connection with the construction of such a harbour. But when the right hon. Gentleman says that this is only a small Vote of £800, I beg to remind the Committee that the House of Commons has already voted more than £39,000 in respect of the preliminary proceedings necessary before the construction of a new harbour at Dover can be undertaken, and especially in connection with the erection of a convict barracks. For the last 50 years plans for a harbour at this spot have been continually submitted to Parliament. According to the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer we have already voted £39,000 in connection with this project; and in addition to that sum in 1873, under the Administration of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gladstone), the House of Commons voted £10,000 for the purpose of taking preliminary steps towards preparing plans for the construction of a harbour at Dover. Fortunately the proposal was one which the Government of the Earl of Beaconsfield subsequently declined to entertain. I have, therefore, risen for the purpose of supporting the views of my noble Friend on the Front Opposition Bench (Lord Randolph Churchill); and I would suggest that if the Government have changed their minds upon the subject of this Vote it would be better that they should withdraw it, and re-introduce it in an amended form, rather than that they should assent to its being amended by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh). I am certainly of opinion that any alteration of the Vote should proceed from the Government themselves rather than from a private Member. In this case the Government are changing the very name and character of the Vote, and are asking the Committee to assent to the alteration.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: After the observations of the noble Lord opposite (Lord Randolph Churchill) I am quite ready to admit that, for the purpose of preventing misapprehension, the Vote had better be withdrawn and re-introduced on a future occasion. There ought to be no doubt or difficulty as to the practice of the Committee in a matter of this importance. I cannot agree, however, with the remark of the right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir Robert Peel) that the Government have changed their minds with regard to the character of this Vote. I think the note at the foot of the Vote shows clearly enough what has always been the intention in proposing the Vote. All the Government desire is that the Vote should be postponed, with the view of its being so drawn as to express clearly the purpose for which the money asked for is to be applied. I beg to move that the Vote be withdrawn.

THE CHAIRMAN: Upon the point of Order which has been raised I have to point out that although it has been extremely rare to alter the terms of a Resolution in Committee of Supply, yet there appears to be a precedent for it. A similar question was raised on May 18, 1863. Exception was then taken to a particular Vote which had been proposed, and it was desired to limit its application. It was held by the Chairman, after discussion, that a Motion in Committee of Supply made by a private Member with regard to a Government

Vote was in Order, provided that it merely proposed to limit the purposes for which the Vote was designed.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Vote be withdrawn."—(*Sir William Harcourt.*)

Major DICKSON (Dover): I would appeal to the Government not to postpone this Vote, which is intended merely to defray the preliminary expenses of survey for what is undoubtedly an important national work. It is perfectly clear that if the preliminary survey is to be postponed from time to time the date for the completion of the harbour will be very distant. The present Vote is simply to pay the expenses of a survey for the purpose of ascertaining the nature of the bottom, and I do hope that the Government will not assent to any further delay.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): I may remind the hon. and gallant Member that it is not proposed to postpone the consideration of the Vote because the Government entertain any doubt with regard to it, nor have they any intention of withdrawing it absolutely; but they merely assented to the suggestion that it should be postponed in order that it may be brought up in an altered form. I may say that it will certainly be brought up again on the next stage of Supply. The question of the construction of a harbour at Dover has already been decided. That question was fully discussed in 1873, and in accordance with the decision arrived at a convict prison has already been built at Dover. The House of Commons has already decided that convict labour is to be employed in the construction of the new harbour at Dover.

Sir ROBERT PEEL (Blackburn): No; the question of constructing a harbour at Dover was not decided on that occasion.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: I say "Yes." Further than that, in the year 1883 the House came to a similar decision without a division; and I would appeal to the hon. and gallant Member for North West Sussex (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) whether on that occasion he did not express his approval of the large scheme which the Government proposed? I may mention, for the information of those hon. Members who were not Members of the last Parliament, that the Government proposed a Vote for the cost of erecting a convict prison at Dover, and that Parliament passed the Vote. That convict prison is now nearly finished, and I believe that accommodation is provided in it for from 200 to 300 convicts. On the occasion to which I refer the House of Commons practically determined what should be done with regard to the employment of convict labour, and what is asked for to-night is that Parliament should have placed before it the result of the preliminary survey and the plans for the construction of a harbour, so that the House of Commons may determine upon the plan to be carried out. There can be no misconception about the matter. A convict prison has been built at Dover, and the convicts are there. As, however, I agree with the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) that there is some little misconception as to the precise nature of this Vote, having regard to the actual wording of it, I think the Vote itself might be postponed, and brought up again on the next occasion when the House is in Committee of Supply.

Mr. BAKER (Somerset, Frome): I cannot quite reconcile the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer with that of the Secretary to the Treasury. The statement of the Secretary to the Treasury entirely alters the position of affairs, and I find myself in this difficulty. The Committee were assured by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that this further Vote was of a tentative character, and was merely intended to cover the expense of a preliminary inquiry for the purpose of ascertaining whether it is desirable or possible to build this harbour at Dover at all; whereas the Secretary to the Treasury has asserted that the question was irrevocably decided by the last Parliament; that, whether we like it not, our hands are tied in the matter; that the present Parliament are committed to a very large expenditure, and that the only question for consideration now is how great that expenditure shall be. Those are two entirely different statements, and I want to know which we are to regard as accurate? I understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that the preliminary expenditure was to be incurred for the purpose of seeing where the harbour should be built, and whether it was desirable to build it. As a new Member of the House, who did not have the advantage of sitting in the last Parliament, I have ventured to ask the Government for information.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I remember very well the discussion taking place which has been referred to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and I must say that I think it is rather late now for those hon. Members who swallowed the camel to strain so much at a very small gnat. As to whether the Government have made up their minds practically as to whether there shall be a harbour or not at Dover that is another question. I know that two or three years ago a discussion took place, and a large sum of money was voted for the purpose of building a barracks for the occupation of the convicts who were to construct the harbour. After having consented to spend something like £40,000 upon the convict prison, it would be carrying economy to a ridiculous point to dispute this very small sum of £800 in order to ascertain whether further works ought to be undertaken or not. I believe that when the Vote for the convict prison was taken the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands) was not in his place, and the Vote was passed without a division; and I do not see why we should squabble now over the price which we agreed to pay.

General Sir GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine): I beg to assure the Committee that the assent of Parliament has never yet been given to the construction of a harbour at Dover. No doubt the Hybrid Committee which in 1875 considered the matter recommended that, should works be undertaken at Dover, the area should be enlarged at an extra cost of £130,000, raising the Estimate from £970,000 to £1,100,000; but the Government of the day refused to carry out the recommendation of that Committee. Indeed, that harbour project was one of a strange character, for it was one in which the two railways, the Dover Harbour Board, and the Government were so mixed up that, whilst the two sets of partners had their money responsibilities and their rights clearly defined, the rights of Government were vague and the financial claims unlimited. Further than that, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he made a speech in reference to the erection of barracks for the occupation of convicts at Dover, about three years ago, distinctly stated that the construction of that prison did not involve the sanction of the House of Commons to the erection of a harbour. Until full information has been given to the House, and the plans, estimates, and Reports have been laid before the Committee of Supply in a detailed form by a responsible Department of the State, I venture to submit that no Vote for the erection of harbour works ought to be taken.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: I think that there ought to be no misapprehension upon this point. My hon. and gallant Friend behind me (Sir George Balfour) has generally a most excellent memory; but on this occasion I think it has failed him. The Vote which was taken three years ago not only had reference to this subject, but there was a Treasury Minute, dated July 17, 1883, in which the whole facts of the case are stated. In the speech which I made on the 16th of August in the same year I referred to this matter. I stated that two harbours had been proposed to be constructed, one being a small one, which could be constructed at a comparatively small cost, and the other a large one, that would necessarily cost more to construct. There is another hon. and gallant Member of this House whose memory, although generally accurate, seems somehow to have failed him upon this occasion—I refer to the hon. and gallant Member for North-West Sussex (Sir Walter B. Barttelot)—who has made a semi-hostile speech against the Vote to-night. But what did the hon. and gallant Member say when I proposed the construction of a harbour at Dover in 1883? The hon. and gallant Member said—

> "He had always taken great interest in Dover Harbour; and he had always thought that if the harbour was to be made, it ought not to be made by a Company, but, as far as possible, by the Government, who ought to make a harbour worthy of the nation. Looking at the present scheme"—

What was the "present scheme?" Of course it was the scheme which I proposed to the House on that date—

> "Looking at the present scheme in all the circumstances under which it was proposed, he thought it was the best way in which the matter could be dealt with. Nobody would deny

that a harbour for the protection of their ships was absolutely necessary; and this consideration would have very great weight, not only for ships of war, but also for ships of all kinds, for the trade and commerce of the country. Believing that the scheme the Government had now put forward"—

What scheme? The scheme for the construction of a harbour at Dover?—

"Believing that the scheme the Government had now put forward, if properly and promptly carried out, was calculated to be of great benefit to the country, he should, therefore, cordially support the Vote."—(3 *Hansard*, [283] 771.)

Having made that speech in favour of building a convict prison, the hon. and gallant Member now gets up and objects to a small Vote for the expenses of a preliminary inquiry as to the character of this harbour. What is the harbour? My hon. and gallant Friend behind me (Sir George Balfour) pointed out what is quite true, that there has been great uncertainty as to the character of the harbour. It is really a breakwater. [Mr. Rylands: So it is at Portland.] All harbours are in a certain sense breakwaters; but the whole character of this harbour was fully brought before the House in 1883. Nothing can be more distinct than my statement to the House on that occasion when I asked for the money for the construction of a convict prison in order to make a harbour at Dover by convict labour. I said—

"The matter had been considered by a Committee of the Cabinet, consisting of the Secretary of State for War, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the President of the Board of Trade, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; and they had come to the conclusion that the first works that ought to be undertaken were those at Dover. The estimated cost of one plan was £790,000; but that would only be sufficient for the construction of a harbour which would afford comparatively little accommodation for the iron-clads. The recommendation of the Committee of 1875, of which his hon. and gallant Friend was a Member, examined some of the highest authorities who could be found, including the Hydrographer of the Navy, Sir A. Clark, the eminent engineer, and Mr. Druce, the engineer at Dover, who was well acquainted with the whole history of Dover Harbour. All those eminent men were in favour of the present proposal; and, therefore, they had as high authority in support of it as could be desired."—(*Ibid.* 765.)

I will not trouble the Committee further by reading the whole of that speech; but I want to show that the whole character of the harbour was fully brought before the House in 1883, and on the basis of the recommendation of a Departmental Committee a Treasury Minute was laid on the Table of the House in reference to these alternative harbours. Now, before Parliament is committed either to the larger or the smaller harbour—[Sir Robert Peel: Or to any.] Or to any; of course the House can always stop. Whether it will be wise or not it will be for the House to consider; but it is always within its power to take that step. It might have stopped the erection of the Houses of Parliament after having completed one-half of the building. At present neither Her Majesty's Government nor the House have yet come to a final decision with regard to the carrying out of the works. It is our desire to investigate the character of the works before the works themselves are finally resolved upon, and it is upon that principle that we ask for this Vote. I think I have now stated to the Committee exactly how the matter stands.

Mr. RYLANDS (Burnley): I think the speech of the right hon. Gentleman has placed the matter in a more reasonable light than that in which it was left by the Secretary to the Treasury. The Secretary to the Treasury seemed to imply in his speech that by the passing of this Vote Parliament and the country would, to a greater or less extent, commit itself to a further expenditure. We are now given to understand that it is the intention of the Government, on the first day upon which the Civil Service Estimates are again taken, to put this Vote down. We further understand that by the present Vote the Committee are committing themselves to nothing but giving the Government funds to enable them to have additional information placed before the House of Commons, together with such plans and estimates as may, in the opinion of the Government, be desirable. When Parliament is in possession of those plans and estimates it will be for the House to say, if the Government decide to go on with the work, whether or not it shall be proceeded with. Upon that first Vote, with the entire estimate and plans before the House, it will be at liberty to reject the Vote if it thinks fit. I think that is a fair position, and I do not think it is necessary that we should carry the matter further.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.) expressed a hope that the Committee would receive a complete assurance from the Government before the debate closed that no steps would be taken to proceed with the works until the assent of Parliament had been fully obtained.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): I wish to remind the Chancellor of the Exchequer, before the Vote is withdrawn, that in the discussion which occurred earlier in the Session upon this question the very same argument which has been put forward now was employed. Though I trust entirely to my memory, I think I am right in saying that assurances were given that the House were in no degree pledged to the considerable outlay which the carrying out of the scheme would involve. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has emphasized the fact that we have already spent £38,000 or £39,000 in connection with the construction of a convict prison and in preliminary proceedings in reference to this harbour. But it does not follow that the new House of Commons should be committed to the expenditure of £1,000,000, even although a convict prison has been built. Unless there is far more enthusiasm and a better informed opinion obtained in regard to the harbour at Dover, I think it would be infinitely cheaper to apply a little dynamite to the convict prison, and leave the convicts to the tender care of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary. I trust that the Committee have now a distinct understanding that the Government are only entering upon a preliminary inquiry, and that we are not by any means to go the entire length to which my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury seeks to carry us. When the preliminary inquiries have been completed let us discuss the matter on its merits, and let it be understood, as the result of the discussion which has now taken place, that we are to have absolute liberty to consider the whole question when it is hereafter brought before us in a formal manner.

Amendment and Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

(1.) £25,120, to complete the sum for Peterhead Harbour.

(2.) £141,485, to complete the sum for Rates on Government Property.

(3.) £7,500, to complete the sum for the Metropolitan Fire Brigade.

(4.) £232,000, to complete the sum for Disturnpiked and Main Roads, England and Wales.

(5.) £30,000, to complete the sum for Disturnpiked and other Roads, Scotland.

(6.) £182,335, to complete the sum for Public Buildings, Ireland.

Mr. SEXTON (Sligo, S.): There is no objection on the part of the Irish Members to have this Vote taken now. The Vote itself is not of a contentious character.

General Sir GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine): I asked for information in regard to an item contained in the Vote in reference to the erection of a fishery pier.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.) said, he would inquire into the matter. He believed that it had already undergone discussion, and that a Report had been laid upon the Table.

Vote *agreed to.*

(7.) £12,208, to complete the sum for Lighthouses Abroad.

(8.) £35,677, to complete the sum for Diplomatic and Consular Buildings.

Mr. RYLANDS (Burnley): I am very sorry to see that in this Vote we are asked to agree to a sum of money being paid for the purchase of an Embassy House at Madrid. I commented upon the extravagance of this Vote last year, and I observe that in the present Vote we are expected to grant a sum of money for the Embassy at Madrid, which amounts altogether to £15,500, of which a sum of £12,000 is required for the purchase of a Legation House. There are, I understand, some further charges in connection with that purchase. I object, and I have objected on many previous occasions, to the expenditure which has been incurred by the Government from time to time in regard to these Embassy Houses abroad. We have been in the habit in former years of hiring, renting, and leasing houses, which have been amply sufficient for the purposes of the Embassy; and the consequence of our building a house or buying one has frequently been that we obtain a place which is very much larger than is required for the ordinary purposes of the Embassy. When the property belongs to the country the Ambassador or Minister manifests a desire to extend the establishment, probably in accordance with the number of his family, possibly to gratify the vanity of his wife, and constant applications are made to the Government for alterations and extensions, the result of which is that unnecessary and large repairs are made in these establishments, which tend to swell every year the very large sum of money the Committee are called upon to vote. Without going at length into the history of this transaction, I do not hesitate to say that in former years, in connection with these purchases, hundreds of thousands of pounds of the public money have been wasted; and we have now in different parts of the world Embassies maintained with great splendour and at very heavy cost. If the expenditure in connection with the Embassy Houses for the accommodation of our Representatives in Foreign Courts could be contrasted with the expenditure of the United States for similar purposes, every hon. Member would be astonished at our extravagance when compared with the economy of our brethren across the Atlantic, who have equally great interests to protect. The Government of the United States know very well how to maintain their Representatives; but they have not the slightest conception of squandering the money of the American people for purposes of this kind in the way we are doing. I think the time may probably come, if the policy of this country becomes one of non-intervention, when we may think it unnecessary to keep up these enormous establishments abroad, and be content with renting houses in the different capitals of Europe. In that case it may be considered desirable to dispense with them when they are found no longer necessary. But here we are called upon to add to our responsibilities by the purchase of a Legation House which we have hitherto been content to hire on lease. I wish to ask my hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what steps have been taken to satisfy the Government, in the first place, as to the necessity of the purchase; what economy will be effected by substituting an Embassy House belonging to this country in place of continuing to rent the building already occupied; and also whether the sum of £12,000 which appears in the present Vote is the whole sum we shall be called upon to pay for this property, or whether there are other sums behind this sum of £12,000 which at some subsequent period the House of Commons will be required to vote?

Mr. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): I should like also to ask for information in reference to this Vote. If my hon. Friend had looked into the various items which constitute the Vote, he would have found a sum of £1,200 for making good the damage to the Embassy House caused by excavations for City sewers, and a further item of £1,500 for the completion of sanitary and other special works. I want to know if that outlay is upon the new house or upon the old one? I also wish to point out to the Committee that the rent of the old Legation House appears to have been £250 a-year, which, at 20 years' purchase, would represent a capital of £5,000. We are now asked to start with a capital of £12,000, with another considerable item for damage done in connection with the drains and sewers of the City. I think that these items go very far in the direction of emphasizing the objections which my hon. Friend has raised to entering upon a capital purchase of this house, and against allowing the various Ministers abroad to indulge their fancy in incurring a large outlay of money for which the taxpayers of this country are to be responsible. I hope my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury, or my hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, will be able to throw some further light upon the matter.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): On the whole, I really believe it is cheaper to buy houses for the accommodation of our Representatives rather than to rent them. Take, for instance, this house at Madrid, the purchase of which is to cost £12,000. That capital sum at 3 per cent would amount to £360 per annum; but last year we paid very considerably more than that sum. Then we must take into consideration not only the rent, but the cost of repairs and other expenses. Last year we rented this house, and we spent £200 in casual and ordinary repairs, and other expenses were incurred which brought up the total to £600 during the year. The real point we should study is to keep down the expenses of our Ministers as far as possible. When a new Minister is sent out it is invariably found that he is displeased with the establishment which has satisfied his predecessor, and he wants some sort of change. If that kind of desire could be kept down I really believe that we should gain more by purchasing these houses than by renting them.

Mr. COOTE (Huntingdon, S.): I should like to know what we have to do with the item of £12,000 which appears in the Vote for making good the damage occasioned to the Legation House by excavations for the City sewers? As the landlords are the City of Madrid, I do not see what we have to do with making any damage of this kind good. I hope the Government will be able to give some information upon the matter.

Mr. LEVESON GOWER (A Lord of the Treasury) (Stafford, N.W.): I think the figures which I shall be able to give the Committee will show that the Government have been actuated by a desire to make the best bargain possible; and I think the Committee will agree with me that the bargain which has been made is not a very bad one. I am not going to defend the principle of buying the house against the principle of renting it. I think the best plan is to take each individual case as it occurs, and see what course will be the most economical and most satisfactory course in the interests of the country. The rent of the Embassy House at Madrid was not £250 a-year, as has been stated, but was £600 a-year; and, as the lease was within a year of expiring, it was expected that the rent would be raised from £600 to £1,000 a-year; so that, practically, we have obtained the house for 12 years' purchase, which I do not think is at all an extravagant price. I may mention that the house which has been purchased is the same house that was previously rented. I believe it has been calculated that the piece of ground alone on which the house stands may be valued at £8,000; and, therefore, it cannot be said that the sum of £12,000 agreed upon as the purchase money is an extravagant sum. As to the item of £1,500 for the completion of sanitary and other special works, I may explain that one of the works undertaken was the making of a new roof. The roof had been allowed to fall very much out of repair, and it was thought absolutely necessary that a new roof should be put upon the building. In regard to the item of £1,200 for making good the damage to the house caused by excavations for the City sewers, I may say that the Government tried all they could to be released from that payment, and to throw it upon the Municipality of Madrid, or upon the Spanish Government; but they found that it was impossible to do so, seeing that they were bound under the lease to do the repairs. They were advised by proper legal authorities that they were absolutely helpless in the matter, and I am not sure that we have yet paid all that we may be called upon to pay. On the contrary, I believe there are some further claims which have not yet been settled. There is no other point which occurs to me as requiring explanation, and I hope the Committee will consider the information I have given satisfactory.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I hope that some further information will be given in regard to this house, the ground of which is said to be worth £8,000. We appear to have expended a large sum last year in repairing damage done by excavations for sewers, and also a considerable sum for sanitary and other works. The expenditure appears to have been very considerable, seeing that we were not the owners of the house; and although it is now proposed that we should become the owners, I think some further explanation is required as to the expenditure which has already taken place. The whole value of the house appears to be £12,000, and yet we have had to pay £1,200 for repairs in consequence of excavations in connection with the City sewers, and £1,500 for sanitary works.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): We leased the house for a term of 10 years at £600 a-year, and we bound ourselves to perform all the necessary repairs, even to the renewal of sashes. Better terms could not be obtained. It has been an unfortunate lease for the lessee. There have been continual objections to it, and I can assure the Committee that the Embassy House at Madrid has been a very anxious question indeed. It is considered that this is the best way of meeting the difficulty. If we do not purchase the house we shall be compelled to rent it at a larger price than we think we ought to pay.

SIR ROBERT PEEL (Blackburn): I should like to know whether the purchase of this house has been recommended by Her Majesty's Minister at Madrid? I understand that the same house has been in the occupation of the Legation for the last 10 years; but if I recollect rightly—and I was for some years connected with the Legation—it is very inconveniently situated indeed. We used formerly to occupy a house which was much better situated. I understand that the present house is in a most inconvenient and narrow street, and I wish to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it has been examined by any architect or any official connected with the Government?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): I am informed that not only has the house been strongly recommended by Sir John Walsham and Sir Robert Morier, but that the Board of Works sent out one of their own surveyors to examine it, and he was satisfied that it would be a suitable house for the Legation.

SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.): I know the Legation House at Madrid very well, and it is certainly a good house for occupation, and every other purpose to which it is devoted. Although part of the street in which it is situated is narrow, yet it is a good street for Madrid, and in that city narrow streets possess in many cases some advantages, because where the thoroughfare is broad the sun is so powerful as to cause illness, and sometimes death. I, for one, maintain that this is a suitable house, and I think the Government have pursued a wise course in purchasing a residence for our Minister. I am opinion that they would do right if they were to purchase Embassy Houses in all places where we do not possess one.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR: (Kincardine): I cannot say that I think the explanation which has been given in regard to the money laid out upon this building for repairs and making good damages in addition to the rent is at all satisfactory.

Vote *agreed to.*

CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE.

(9.) £70,974, to complete the sum for Law Charges.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I should like to know, before this Vote is taken, in what manner the employment of solicitors to conduct prosecutions is regulated by the Treasury? I quite understand that there are prosecutions conducted by the Public Prosecutor. The prosecutions conducted by the Treasury Solicitor are also clear; but there are, in addition, prosecutions conducted by private solicitors, under instructions from Scotland Yard, which do, or at any rate did, figure in the Votes. I should like to know whether any such accounts figure in the Votes now; and, if they do not, how long that has ceased to be the case? If they do appear in the Votes, I should like to know what kind of rule governs the employment of solicitors in public prosecutions?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): I may explain that, under the Act passed last year, all public prosecutions are now practically under the control of the Solicitor to the Treasury. It is in the discretion of the Solicitor to the Treasury to conduct prosecutions himself, or to employ legal agents for that purpose. The opinion of the Committee which sat upon the question was that, as far as London and the neighbourhood are concerned, it is not necessary to employ any other solicitor than the Solicitor to the Treasury, and they expressed their disapprobation of any other course being adopted; but in Manchester, Liverpool, and other large towns, it is left to his discretion to employ other individuals who are paid on agency terms, and, therefore, only receive half of the costs, the other half being paid into the Public Exchequer. I believe that the existing arrangements are not only working satisfactorily, but economically. The Department of Public Prosecutor has, however, not been in existence sufficiently long to enable any outside opinion to be expressed as to what the ultimate result of the change will be. In the course of another year we shall probably be able to form a conclusion.

MR. BRADLAUGH: The answer of the hon. Gentleman is thoroughly satisfactory as far as it goes; but I wish to know if the Committee are to understand that there is now no longer within the Metropolitan District a possibility of three sets of persons being employed to institute prosecutions on behalf of the Crown? Are the whole of the prosecutions under the control of the Solicitor to the Treasury?

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: Yes.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine): I find that the Vote includes expenses connected with the Statute Law Revision Committee; but there is no information given as to the state of the Revision, or of the progress which is being made with it. Matters appear to be allowed to go on from year to year; and, though nothing is done, yet expenses are incurred without the slightest information being given in regard to what is being done. I wish further to know if it is not possible to obtain the Statutes which have been revised at a moderate price, and also the Index now presented and prepared at the cost of Government?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER): I may explain that the revision of the Statutes has been completed down to the year 1878; but it is necessarily a slow and expensive work. The revised edition cannot, therefore, well be sold at a less price than at present, for I need hardly say that the work is not remunerative.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR: I do not think that the price of the Statutes which have been revised and published ought to be very considerable. I am not satisfied, however, with the explanation of the hon. Gentleman.

Vote *agreed to.*

(10.) £129,277, to complete the sum for Criminal Prosecutions, Sheriffs' Expenses, &c.

(11.) £352,219, to complete the sum for the Supreme Court of Judicature.

MR. RYLANDS (Burnley): I wish to obtain some explanation from the Government in regard to this Vote. The Vote includes the salaries of the officials in the Central Office of the Supreme Court. Two or three years ago I took the opportunity of calling the attention of the Committee to the very large expenditure which had been incurred in connection with the Central Office, and to the fact that the officials of that Department of the Supreme Court were very partially employed, and that there was a great waste of expenditure in consequence of too large a number of persons being employed in the duty which devolves on that Department of the High Court. In reply to the remarks I made on that occasion, the present Lord Chancellor, the then Solicitor General (Sir Farrer Herschell), admitted that the facts which I brought before the Committee were correct. He stated that it was impossible to justify the expenditure which was being incurred in this Department, and he agreed that under the arrangements of the Department too many officials were employed, and that there was room for considerable economy. He promised that the matter should be very carefully inquired into, with the view of securing the re-organization of the Department. I think I have mentioned the subject once or twice since; but, so far as appears from the Vote, the criticisms which have been made have not had the slightest effect upon the expenditure. On the contrary, I perceive that there has been an annual increment of salary rather than a reduction, and a general increase of expenditure. The point on which I wish to ask for information from the Secretary to the Treasury now is this — I think the pledge which the Government made to me has been carried out to this extent—that there has been an official inquiry instituted, and I believe that some Committee or other authority has been engaged in an investigation in order to see how far an impression may be made on the expenditure. Before proceeding further with my criticism of the Vote, I think my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury should tell the Committee what steps have been taken. I am alluding to the Central Office of the Supreme Court, which commences on page 211 of the Estimates, about half-way down the page. It will be seen that it includes some of the Taxing Officers, in regard to which there were complaints on the last occasion the Vote was under discussion. I trust that my hon. Friend will be able to give the Committee some information as to the steps which have been taken, even if he cannot tell us what the result of the inquiry has been, and what measures the Government intend to take with a view of reducing the redundancy of officials in this Department, and to secure the economy which I think might very well be secured by introducing a change.

Mr. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne): I wish that the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands), whose care and accuracy in these matters we all know, had been kind enough to do what our Scotch Friends call "condescend upon particulars." I happen to know something about the Supreme Court of Justice; I have spent a good many gloomy hours there; but I have still to discover what class of officials is too numerous and too highly paid. There was some slight suggestion made by the hon. Member in reference to the Taxing Master's Office; but I have heard from that Office complaints that the officials have too much to do, and that they have not time enough to do it in. The assertion, therefore, comes with astonishment upon me that they are overpaid, and too numerous. As the House is in Committee, the hon. Member has not exhausted his power of speaking; and, therefore, in the course of the discussion he will, perhaps, be good enough to tell us which of these officers are overworked and too highly paid? He has told us that the Lord Chancellor (Lord Herschell) agreed with his views when he raised the question some time ago; but I am certainly very much surprised to hear that these humble, modest, and respectable officers are overpaid. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) knows as much about that matter as I do, and his abilities are much better recognized than mine. Perhaps he will be able to bear out the experience I have gained of these officials, which certainly leads me to believe that, considering the work they have to do, and the position they occupy, they are neither too numerous nor too highly paid. I am afraid that the opinion of the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands) would not carry that weight with it which it might otherwise have unless he is kind enough to inform the Committee which of the officials of the Supreme Court his criticisms apply to.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I think that if the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands) had only carefully studied the Vote which he has ventured to criticize he would have found on the very page he has cited an explanation quite sufficient to answer his own remarks. It is clearly set forth, on page 211 of the Estimates, that there are six first-class clerks, one of whom is paid upon the old scale of from £600 to £700 a-year, whereas all the other five are paid on the new scale from £500 to £600 a-year. It is the same with regard to the clerks in the other classes. For instance, in the third class there are three paid upon the old scale of £200 a-year, and three upon the new scale of £100 a-year; and the same distinction appears throughout. Whenever a vacancy occurs the old scale is abandoned, and the new scale is brought into operation. So that there is a constant reduction taking place; and there is, therefore, no ground, as far as I can see, for the indefinite and vague complaint which the hon. Member for Burnley has made. But with regard to this Vote I should be glad to elicit some information from the hon. Gentleman in charge of it as to what the Government propose to do in reference to the number of Judges and the Circuit arrangements. During the whole of last century 12 Judges were sufficient to transact the business of the country; and during the earlier years of this century—I believe down to the year 1830—the Judges for the Common Law and Criminal business numbered only 12. About the year 1830 the number was raised to 15, specially with regard to the necessities of the Circuit arrangements. Afterwards, when the House of Commons delegated to the Judges the duty of hearing Election Petitions, the number was raised from 15 to 18; but, in the meantime, the population had considerably increased also. When the Judicature Act established the Court of Appeal three Judges were told off as Appeal Judges, and it was necessary to make a further increase of the total number. The Circuit arrangements were somewhat modified at that time, but not very considerably. The rule was that the two Judges went to each of the seven or eight Circuits; North and South Wales being considered one, and having two Judges between them. The Circuit arrangements were still considered unsatisfactory, and another alteration was made, by which the single Judge system was instituted; and the consequence of this single Judge system has been that, although we have had a sufficient number of Judges remaining in London for continuous sittings, upon the Circuits we have had the delay, which was foreseen at the time the Order in Council, establishing the system, was issued. We had a very signal illustration of that in the South-Eastern Circuit at Chelmsford last year, when Mr. Baron Huddleston found himself quite unable to cope with the business at the different towns on the Home Circuit, and was compelled, at great inconvenience to everybody concerned, to make arrangements which inflicted great hardship upon many persons who had business at the Assizes, and especially upon the witnesses. An Order in Council enables a Judge, when alone upon a Circuit, if he finds himself unable to get through the criminal work of any particular Assize, to postpone the Commission day at the next Assize town. In this case Mr. Baron Huddleston found it absolutely impossible to get through the work which had to be done at Norwich, and he was, therefore, compelled to postpone the Commission day at Chelmsford, and also at Hertford, Maidstone, and Lewes. At Lewes it did not very much matter, because it was the end of the Assize; but all the witnesses, prisoners, and everybody who were required to be in attendance at Hertford, Chelmsford, and Maidstone were kept hanging about from day to day, and from week to week, at very great loss, and at very serious inconvenience. I understand that some representations have been made to the Government in regard to the inconvenience which arises from the present system, and when the system is revised care should be taken to provide against these inconveniences. It would be satisfactory to know, as soon as possible, whether the inconveniences which were experienced last year are likely to be repeated in the present year. There is also another point which I desire to mention. It is one which I have urged every year for three successive years, and it is one on which I have received assurances from three successive Attorney Generals that something will be done. The matter I refer to is the great delay which now occurs in the Taxing Department, and especially in the Chancery taxation. I see no earthly reason why there should not be continuous taxation all through the Long Vacation. We have three Taxing Masters, and surely it ought not to be a very difficult thing to arrange that the whole of these officers should not take their leave all at once for two months at a time. The attendance in the Taxing Office is not very strict; nobody goes there very early, and nobody remains there very late. No doubt the whole of the officers, as the hon. and learned Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Addison) has remarked, are extremely courteous and urbane; but their hours of attendance are very meagre indeed, and very often something or other prevents an important officer from being in his place at a very early hour in the morning. The consequence is that the suitors are kept in attendance for months and months, simply because a certain amount of clerical attendance is not given during the Long Vacation. I would ask why there should not be continuous taxation, at any rate, by one Taxing Master all through the Long Vacation? It would be a great boon, not only to solicitors, but also to successful suitors who, at present, although they have vindicated their claim to justice, are not able to obtain from justice those results to which they are entitled.

MR. COOTE (Huntingdon, S.): There is one point to which I wish to call the attention of the Government, which at present is the cause of considerable and unnecessary expense. Sometimes an Assize is fixed to be held in a town where there are absolutely no cases to be tried. In such cases we often have the Judges coming down, together with the grand jurors and the petty jurors, at considerable expense; tenant farmers have to leave their farms and come up to the county town, wasting several hours, and when they get there they find there are no cases to be heard at all. This is not only an expense to the persons concerned in the localities, but is also a serious expense to the country. The Judges have to come down, and all the paraphernalia of opening the Commission of Assize is gone through when there are absolutely no prisoners to be tried. I think that some alteration ought to be made, and that jurors and others summoned to attend an Assize, under such circumstances, should have notice sent to them when it is found that they will have nothing to do.

General Sir GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine): I believe that the inconveniences which have been pointed out have been inquired into already, but as far as I know without any practical result. I am inclined to believe that if a military man were placed at the head of affairs an enormous saving of expense might be effected.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I do not know whether it is possible for the Government, in dealing with this Vote, to give any kind of pledge with regard to the important matter alluded to by the hon. Member for Huntingdon (Mr. Coote)—namely, the holding of an Assize, with all the attendant inconvenience and expense, when there is no business to transact. I feel that if legislation is needed in so serious a matter, and one which involves so large a cost to the country, it ought at once to take place. It is an outrage on the Judges and upon everyone else that they should be taken down to an Assize town when it is known before they get there that there is no business for them to transact. I do not know whether legislation is needed, or whether there is sufficient power to regulate the matter by an Order in Council; but I think the Government ought to take some means to prevent such a ludicrous waste of public time and public money.

Mr. GREGORY (Sussex, East Grinstead), who was very imperfectly heard, was understood to say that the officers in the Taxing Office in the Court of Chancery had very laborious duties to perform; that they performed them satisfactorily; and that there would be no advantage gained by continuous sittings. In regard to the official staff of the Central Court a Commission had been appointed, under the auspices of the Lord Chief Justice of England, for the purpose of considering the nature of the Masters' and the Clerks' duties, and the number and efficiency of the staff; and he believed that arrangements would be carried out in accordance with the recommendations of that Commission.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.): My hon. Friend behind me has alluded to the Committee which sat in 1872-3 to inquire into these matters. I was a Member of that Committee, and we went into various questions connected with the expenditure of the Department, and our investigation resulted in several reforms being carried out. I am not at the present moment prepared to enter into a discussion upon the subjects which have been raised, and I am certainly not in a position to say that no further reforms, even upon a considerable scale, are necessary.

Mr. RYLANDS (Burnley): My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Addison) is evidently under some misapprehension as to the nature of the remarks I made. I never meant to imply that the clerks who have work to do fail to do it, or that we should underpay them for the work they perform. What I said was that there are too many officials in this Department, and that there is not anything like a sufficient amount of work to keep them in employment; and, therefore, that the expenditure, seeing that the work is of a mechanical nature, might be cut down. The hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. A. O'Connor) has been good enough to say that if I would look at the Vote I would be satisfied, and would get all the information I have asked for from the Government. The hon. Member is altogether mistaken. The statement contained in the Estimates does not give me the slightest information in regard to the points to which I wish to call the attention of the Secretary to the Treasury. Let me repeat, as shortly as I can, what it was that I stated. I said that the Central Office of the Supreme Court of Justice, as established under the Judicature Act, consists of certain Departments in the High Court. At the time the Act was passed it was not very well understood by the Government how far the different Departments would be employed, and the number of the staff in the Central Office was fixed very much in excess of the amount of work they have to do. But that number has not been at all reduced since 1880, or since the period when I first brought the matter under the attention of the Committee of Supply. What I did on the occasion when I first brought it before the Committee in 1883 was to mention several cases in which there were highly paid clerks receiving £600 or £700 a-year, who had under them three or four other clerks, and who had such a small amount of work to perform that they were in the habit of going away for long periods. The hon. and learned

Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Addison) asks me to give him a case in which there is a redundancy of clerks. I will refer him to the Writ Office. The fact is that that Department is divided into six separate Departments, each of which has a very highly paid clerk at its head. I stated in Committee of Supply in 1883 that these several divisions of the Writ Department had nothing like the amount of work which was necessary to keep up the staff of officials, and that, in point of fact, several of the officers do not find it necessary to be regular or constant in their attendance. Then, again, there is the Department of the Queen's Remembrancer. That is an Office which involves a very large expenditure with very little work. In point of fact, it is notorious—so notorious that the Solicitor General—Sir Farrer Herschell—representing the Government, admitted the accuracy of the statement which I made on authority which I could not doubt, but upon information which was certainly supplied to me. Sir Farrer Herschell acknowledged that my statements were true, and he stated that a sort of tentative arrangement was made in 1880 to secure a certain number of clerks for the work of the Office. It afterwards turned out that the staff appointed was in excess of the duties to be performed; and, therefore, there ought to have been a considerable reduction in the number of persons employed, in which case considerable economy would have been effected. But, although that admission was made, since that time, as far as I can see, there is no evidence whatever of any economy having been effected. Hon. Members who are new to the House will find out before long that irregularities of this kind are frequently admitted, and that reforms are promised; but the same items appear constantly in the Estimates, and there is no evidence whatever that the Government have made any reduction. In this instance I believe the fact is that, instead of having made a reduction, there are in reality a larger number of clerks altogether than there were formerly. No doubt some of them may possibly be of a less expensive character; but it is undoubtedly the fact that there are a larger number of clerks now than there were last year, and that the total expenditure is somewhat higher. The hon. Member for Sussex (Mr. Gregory) has said that a Departmental Committee have instituted an inquiry in accordance with the promise of Sir Farrer Herschell. In that case, as the Government must have had the matter brought under their notice by the action of the Departmental Committee, I think my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury might have been able to give the Committee some information as to the nature and result of their investigation. I presume that as he has refrained from doing so the information is probably not in his possession. I know that in former years the criticisms which have been passed upon this Vote have always been responded to by one of the Law Officers of the Crown—usually the Solicitor General. I do not see the Attorney General in his place, and perhaps the excuse of the Government is that they are rather deficient in their Legal Department. I should certainly like to know what steps the Government propose to take in regard to this Vote—whether the Departmental Committee is still sitting, whether they have reported, and whether the Government themselves will give some undertaking that there will be a material reduction in the expenditure next year?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): I think the Committee is very much indebted to my hon. Friend for having called attention to these matters; but, although a grievance may be admitted, and may be unmistakable, it is not so easy all at once to put a remedy in force. The redundant or extra clerks are there, and they cannot be got rid of until vacancies naturally arise. When vacancies do arise the appointments will not be filled up. I would refer my hon. Friend to page 211 of the Estimates, from which he will see that a considerable reduction has been made with regard to third class, and also in the case of first-class clerks. There used to be six third-class clerks commencing at a salary of £200 and rising to £300. That has been altered, and the third-class clerks now commence at £100 rising to £200. At present, however, we have only been able to operate upon three clerkships. In regard to first-class clerks there used to be six at £600 a-year each; but there is only one now at £600, the other five having salaries upon the new scale at

£500. It will therefore be seen that considerable reductions have already taken place, although the total number of clerks appears to have been slightly increased. There has been considerable difficulty in carrying out these reductions. As to the Committee to which my hon. Friend has referred, I cannot say exactly whether they have presented a Report or not; but I can assure him that it is one of the matters on which I agree with him—that it is necessary to keep down the establishment to a proper working strength. Unfortunately, when business does increase there is an immediate demand for increased assistance; but when it decreases again those reductions are not made which should be made in accordance with the decrease of business. The amount received from fees this year in connection with the Court of Judicature was £376,627, and the amount of the cost is £421,000. Whether the time will ever come—and I hope it may—when the administration of justice can be regarded as self-supporting, I cannot say; but I do not think that the cost of administration is increasing out of proportion to the amount of business transacted. I may add that there are even yet great complaints of delay in disposing of the business.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): There is one point which the Secretary to the Treasury has overlooked in his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands). He has made no reference to the Queen's Remembrancer's Department. I may say from my own knowledge that the gentlemen connected with that Department are extremely civil. Fortunately, or rather unfortunately, I have had some experience of them; but what I have not succeeded in discovering is that they are very useful. The whole work of this Office could, I believe, be well done in other Offices, and enormous expense is incurred to the country by its existence. The business done is comparatively so little that the Law Officers of the Crown, and others connected with the administration of justice, do not appear to be quite aware of the Rules by which some of the business is governed. The Rules, indeed, are so much a matter of mystery that the learned Attorney General for the time being was not aware of them, and the Judges themselves do not appear to be much better informed. In regard to the Exchequer portion of the business the old Rules made by the Barons of Exchequer exist in a sort of patchwork form; and I have heard of one defendant who turned to his own advantage the general ignorance which prevailed.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I wish to say a word upon a point which was alluded to upon a former occasion, and to which I know that the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury paid some attention himself before he accepted his present Office—an Office which he fills with so much advantage to the country. In the debate which took place the year before last a reference was made to the amounts charged for Judicature stamps. Just before the hon. Gentleman sat down he hinted that he should be glad to see the time arrive when the business of the High Court of Judicature would be self-supporting, and he added, I believe, that it was approaching that condition. Now, I hold that taking the legal business of the country as a whole it ought never to be made self-supporting, and that it never can be made self-supporting without doing injustice to some suitors, because there must always be a criminal branch of the Judicature in which the expenditure incurred in the administration of justice ought not to fall upon the suitors in the Civil Courts. If there was a strict investigation, I think it would be found beyond all question that a large surplus is derived from the fees from the Chancery Division, which really goes, to some extent, to pay the cost of the criminal business of the country. It may be that the cost of the ordinary civil business should, to a considerable extent, be recouped to the country by the fees levied; but I hold that it is an injustice to the suitors, and an entirely wrong principle, to allow to any extent a surplus to arise from any particular branch of the Judicature. It is perfectly right that the suitors in the Chancery Division should pay sufficient in stamps to allow of the proper administration of estates; but it is hardly right that they should contribute to the carrying on of the criminal or other legal business of the country. I think there is reasonable ground for supposing, from the amount received from stamps, that in some branches of Judicature they are greatly too high. It would appear from the Estimates that the total amount of the Vote for the High Court of Judicature is £421,000; but to arrive at the total cost it is necessary to add £150,000 for the salaries of the Judges. It would not be fair to add the whole of that sum, because we know that half of the time of the Common Law Division is taken up with criminal business, and no one would suggest that provision ought to be made by stamps on the civil business of the Court to cover the cost of the criminal business of the country. Looking through the items of this Vote, I think there are several which ought to be taken off, and ought not to be covered by stamps left from the suitors. Take the charge for Clerks of Assize. That is a charge which certainly ought not to fall upon the suitors. Then, again, there is the charge for District Probate Registries. I fail to see why the fees levied in the Queen's Bench and Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice should be charged with the cost of the District Probate Registries, amounting to £41,000. The whole of the duties of these District Probate Registries is taken up with proving wills and letters of administration, and the stamps taken in that Department are not included in the stamps which are included in this Estimate. Then, again, there are the costs of Election Petitions, and other items which, if deducted from this Vote, would amount to £89,899. What I say is, that it is not fair that the cost of the administration of justice in these Departments should be defrayed by the fees received from suitors' stamps. I think the suitors have a right to complain of the position in which they are placed at present; and I hope the Secretary to the Treasury will be able to give some assurance that steps will be taken to carry out what I know was in his mind some time ago—namely, an investigation into the relative amount of stamps levied in connection with different branches of the judicature business, and the cost of that part of it which ought not to be paid for by suitors' stamps in the Civil Divisions.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): I am afraid that if we were to divide the fees as my hon. Friend suggests it would be necessary to discuss other sources of expenditure beyond those to which he has referred. If my hon. Friend will look at the Estimates again I think he will find that our expenses for the administration of justice are a very long way in excess of the fees we receive, and there is a very large margin yet to be made up before we approach anything like the balancing of one with the other. On the page of the Estimates to which my hon. Friend has referred, which gives the figure of £421,000, he will find that there are non-effective charges which amount to £200,000, in addition to the £150,000 for the salaries of the Judges, £72,000 for pensions and compensations, and there must also be added £95,000 for criminal charges under Vote 2. If my hon. Friend will add these figures together, he will find that they come to a total of £866,000, which more nearly represents the expenditure for the administration of justice than £421,000, while the fees received amount only to £376,000,

MR. TOMLINSON: There are the fees received from bankruptcy also.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: The charge for bankruptcy is a separate charge altogether, and is contained in another Vote. Therefore, if we take the fees at £376,000, and the cost of administration at £866,000, it will be seen that there is a surplus of nearly £500,000 to be made up before we can talk about the fees from civil business approaching the cost of the administration of justice. The cost of the Probate Registries included in this Vote amounted to £41,000; but the fees are only estimated at £21,000, as will appear from the items on the bottom of the page we are now on.

MR. TOMLINSON: I did not refer to the District Registries of the Supreme Court, but to the District Probate Registries. I take it that the fees received in the District Registries go to the High Court of Justice.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: The matter is a very small one—the fees amounting to £21,000. I certainly cannot hold out any hope of any reduction in the revenue derived from this source. I remember the debate which took place two or three years ago on this question, at the time my hon. Friend the Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr. Courtney) was Financial Secretary to the Treasury. I still hold the view that the general public ought not to be taxed for the administration of civil business at all. I have never been able to appreciate the argument that the general public, out of the taxes levied upon them, ought to pay the cost of private litigation. In the Court of Chancery a very large amount of the business transacted is non-contentious—especially where it relates to the administration of estates and to questions which arise between trustees and executors; but it must be borne in mind, as I have already pointed out, that the fees received are only £376,000 against an expenditure of £866,000. Of course, when the law is put in operation by the State the State should pay the cost; but I cannot hold out the slightest hope that any Government will be likely to give a friendly ear to a reduction of the small income now received in the shape of fees.

Sir R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): I understand the hon. Gentleman to say that the cost of putting the Criminal Law into force ought to be borne by the State. Now, that is a very broad proposition; and I should like to know how far it is to be carried out. Of course, it would include indictments at the Assizes and Sessions. Does the hon. Gentleman say that the State ought to bear the expense of the whole of those prosecutions? I am not finding fault with the proposition; but I want to know how far it is to be carried out. Then, again, there is a large number of cases which are not tried at the Assizes or Sessions, but are disposed of by the magistrates in the Police Courts. They are of a similar character; but the cost falls upon the unfortunate persons who have to be tried. A man may be brought up and fined, say, 1*s.* and costs. He pays 1*s.* very readily, but the costs often run up to 14*s.* Are these expenses which my hon. Friend wishes to throw upon the country, or where does he draw the line? It would have a serious effect upon the Expenditure of the country if the proposition were carried out to its full extent, and therefore I would like to know where the line is to be drawn?

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: My right hon. Friend has placed upon the principle I laid down a much larger application than I contemplated myself. I simply meant the principle which the right hon. Gentleman enunciated himself when he introduced and carried his Bill. I think we are all greatly indebted to the right hon. Gentleman for the service he has rendered in reducing these iniquitous costs. I think it is a gross injustice to fine a man 2*s.* 6*d.* and costs, and then mulct him in fees which amount to 16*s.* or 17*s.* That is a great fault in our administration of justice. The whole system is unsound, and it is really an additional mode of punishing a man. You give him a certain amount which is to go into the fine pocket, and another, and a much larger amount, which is to go into the fee pocket. In the conversation which I had with the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson), I did not intend to lay down such a broad principle as that. I had rather, in my own mind, the cost at present borne by the State in connection with the Assizes and Sessions.

Mr. TOMLINSON: I do not desire that the cost of civil litigation should be thrown on the country. I do not differ much from my hon. Friend in thinking that the suitors ought to pay the ordinary costs of private litigation. What I said was, that from the way in which this Vote is made up criminal jurisdiction is mixed up with civil jurisdiction, and we have no means of knowing whether the stamps paid by the suitors are not more than are justified by the business transacted. If you ascertain the amount of fees, and set it against the cost of carrying on the business, you will find that the suitors in the Chancery Division are really contributing largely towards the cost of transacting the criminal business of the country.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I have not gathered from the Government what it is intended to do in regard to the grievous block of business in the Taxing Master's Office. None of those who have hitherto spoken on the part of the Government have dealt with the matter. Will anything be done?

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that that is a matter with which the Lord Chancellor will deal. Neither the Treasury nor the Home Secretary can deal with it.

Vote *agreed to.*

(12.) £10,930, to complete the sum for the Wreck Commission.

(13.) £408,804, to complete the sum for County Courts.

(14.) £1,942, to complete the sum for Land Registry.

(15.) £18,690, to complete the sum for Revising Barristers, England.

Mr. GREGORY (Sussex, East Grinstead): No doubt, the work of the Revising Barristers of the country has been largely increased by the great addition which was last year made to the franchise, and yet it is proposed to take a reduced sum for this work. The Revising Barristers were called upon to do their work last year in 19 days, and that was considered by them far too short a period. They thought they ought to work a greater number of days, and that it was the number of hours that ought to be considered in fixing their remuneration, and not the number of days during which they could sit to dispose of their business. If the hours were considered, a certain number representing a day's work, the result would be very different to that which is shown. Under high pressure and the exceptional circumstances of the case last year, the Revising Barristers worked a great deal more than they could properly have been called upon to work; and you cannot expect them to do that constantly, year by year. They worked at least 10 hours a-day. I should be glad if the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury would give me some explanation on this point, and would tell me whether it would not be possible to assess the remuneration of Revising Barristers upon a somewhat fairer footing than that adopted at present? I hope the hon. Gentleman will see his way to do this.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): I cannot agree with my hon. Friend, who seems to doubt the wisdom of the proposed reduction. The Vote was largely increased last year on account of the pressure put upon the Revision owing to the shortness of time for the preparation of the Register after the passing of the Franchise Act, the General Election taking place in November. I went into the matter very carefully, in connection with the Home Office, and my impression was, in regard to the increase in the number of Revising Barristers, that there was really no necessity for it. The great pressure was only put upon these officials for 19 or 20 days. To the surprise of everyone the work for the Revising Barristers to do is now less than it was before, owing to the simplicity of the franchise. The manner in which the Registers are made up points to a reduction in the work of revision rather than to an increase. There is another point which occupied the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the present Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt) when he was Home Secretary, and one which, I have no doubt, has not failed to attract the notice of his Successor—namely, the desirability of so rearranging the work of the Revising Barristers that they shall neither have too much or too little to do. They propose that in the future the work shall be apportioned reasonably, and they are of opinion that we shall have ample Barristers even with a less number than we have at present. I believe the Home Office is in correspondence with the Lord Chief Justice on the matter. The number of days the Revising Barristers sat last year amounted to 2,324. That was with 123 Barristers. The usual number is 89, and allowing each of them to sit 25 days that would give 2,225 days in all; but last year, as I say, the number of days was 2,324. The salaries are calculated upon each Revising Barrister sitting 25 days. As the hon. Member has pointed out, last year some of the Revising Barristers made the days much longer than is usually reckoned upon; but I do not think the number of hours these gentlemen were at work would make as much as 3,000 days. My desire and that of the Home Office is to see the Vote reduced. I cannot see my way, at any rate, to proposing an increase.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER (Isle of Wight): I think there is a very general desire for a reduction in the number of Revising Barristers. I would remind the Committee of another reason why a larger number than usual was asked for last year, and that is because the new franchise then came into operation for the first time. In the future we shall only have to deal with the normal increase in the number of electors from year to year, and I think that in all probability a less number of Revising Barristers than were employed last year will henceforward be sufficient. Exceptional industry and energy were shown by the Revising Barristers last year. They sat long hours, and got through their work with remarkable expedition. It is necessary to deal with the question of Revising Barristers, and deal with it soon, because last year we were obliged to pass an Act dealing only with the then coming year. I hope the question will be dealt with speedily, as it is important that it should be put upon a sound and substantial basis. The matter the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury referred to—of utilizing the spare time of the gentlemen who act as Revising Barristers—must be carefully considered. The alteration of the Circuits has rendered it difficult to arrange the appointments of these gentlemen over the same area as of old, and I therefore trust the Government will deal with that matter. With regard to the salaries of these gentlemen, I think no one can fairly contend that they are too highly paid, if they do their work in the future as well as they have done it in the past.

Vote *agreed to.*

(16.) £13,065, to complete the sum for Police Courts, London and Sheerness.

(17.) £409,730, to complete the sum for the Metropolitan Police.

Sir WALTER B. BARTTELOT (Sussex, North-West): I think that now we have the Vote for the Metropolitan Police before us we ought to hear from my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary some statement with regard to what it is the intention of the Government to do as to the reorganization of the Force. As I understood from the statement the right hon. Gentleman made some time ago, there were to be certain alterations made with regard to the Metropolitan Police. I understood from him that in the matter of officers there were to be certain fresh appointments made, and that there was to be a different distribution of officers to that which at present exists. Of course, to every person who may happen to live in the Metropolis the efficiency of the Police Force is their very first concern. The Force, taking it individually and taking it collectively, has done its duty exceedingly well from the time of its organization to the present day; and I think that the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary himself stated, with regard to Sir Edmund Henderson, that during the 18 years that that gentleman has been the Chief Officer of the Force he has performed his duty admirably and to the satisfaction both of the right hon. Gentleman himself and those who have had te deal with the police. It was only on one unfortunate occasion that the right hon. Gentleman thought it his duty to make some comments, and on that occasion the Chief Officer thought it his duty to resign, and it was, perhaps, best, in his own interest as well as the interests of the Force, that he should do so. There has been a very remarkable statement made as to what are believed, I may say known, to be the services of Sir Edmund Henderson; and I, for one, believe that we cannot too highly appreciate those services, or state in too strong terms that we believe that during the time he was in power he did his duty to the best of his ability. The question as to whether or not on that unfortunate 8th of February he committed an error, I am not going to enter into; but I suppose the Treasury know what they are going to do in the case of Sir Edmund Henderson—namely, as to what retiring allowance he is to receive. But, with regard to the Metropolitan Police, taking it as a whole, no one, I think, will deny that in London it has done its duty admirably. The Metropolitan Police Force has been considered by people cognizant of the facts and well qualified to give an opinion to be a most efficient body of men for the discharge of those multifarious duties which devolve upon them. No doubt, some improvements may be effected in the Force; and I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is prepared to state to the Committee the alterations he proposes to make in the organization of the Force?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.): I will divide the remarks of my hon. and gallant Friend into two parts—those in which he referred to the personal services of Sir Edmund Henderson and the efficiency of the Police, and those in which he asks me what we propose to do in the way of bringing about changes in the organization of the Force. As to the first part of his observations, I adhere literally to what I said some weeks ago, when the question of the disturbance on

February 8 came before the House. I spoke in the highest terms then of Sir Edmund Henderson's energy and efficiency throughout the long series of years during which he had been at the head of the police, and I stated that his services fully justified those who recommended him for the high office which he held. All that I have since heard confirms me in that impression. I cannot say this in better terms than I used on the occasion to which I allude. As to the efficiency of the Force, I believe that the Metropolitan Police are a most efficient Body. They have had very trying times to go through—I am not referring to the present year, but to past years—and I doubt whether in any capital in Europe there is a more efficient or better Force. So much for what the hon. and gallant Gentleman said in respect to the character of the Force. I should now like to say a few words as to what is proposed to be done in connection with the organization of the Force. My hon. and gallant Friend did not quite correctly state what I said some time ago upon this question, after having made inquiries into the matter. What I said was this—That the inquiry naturally suggested certain reforms which might be made in the management and the organization of the Police Force, and I undertook to study very carefully the three previous inquiries, and then, with the assistance of the new Chief Commissioner and certain persons whom I proposed to associate with myself, to institute a very careful inquiry into the organization of the Police Force, and see what reforms, if any, could with advantage be carried out, having before me not only the evidence taken in the early part of this year, but also previous Reports, and evidence taken by previous inquiries. I said that we should not undertake this inquiry until after the appointment of the new Chief Commissioner, and when Sir Charles Warren arrived to take up his appointment I consulted him as to the time at which the inquiry should commence. Sir Charles Warren, I thought very properly and naturally, said that he should like a short time to elapse before entering upon an inquiry of that kind, and I therefore arranged with him that it should take place as soon as possible after Easter, and the inquiry will commence next week. I am thus fulfilling literally the promise which I made. I cannot say the exact day on which the inquiry will commence, but it will commence next week. I am happy to inform the Committee that my right hon. and learned Friend and late Colleague the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James), who occupied the position of Attorney General for many years, has been so good as to offer to assist me; and I do not know anyone in the House who is capable of rendering, or who is likely to render, greater service in this respect than my right hon. and learned Friend. I shall also have the assistance in making the inquiry of one of the most distinguished Metropolitan Police Magistrates. We shall, therefore, I think, have a body of gentlemen most competent to undertake this searching inquiry. I do not conceal from myself that our labours will be of a very serious character, and may occupy a long time; but, as I said before, I think it better that an inquiry of this kind, after the previous inquiries that have taken place, should be conducted under the direct responsibility of the Head of the Department. I have, therefore, undertaken the responsibility; and I hope that before very long I shall be able to communicate to the House what recommendations may be made as to the better organization of the Force, or as to any additional appointments that may be made, or any economies that may be effected. My hon. and gallant Friend was quite mistaken as to what I said some time ago upon the question of appointments. All I did was to explain to the House what the general tenour of the evidence upon this question taken by the Committee was. That evidence has been laid on the Table, and beyond what was contained in the Report I did not commit myself to anything. I am glad to repeat that now, because an impression has got abroad that a large number of appointments are about to be made, and I am almost afraid to tell the Committee the number of hundreds of applications; but there are several hundreds, which I have received from gentlemen anxious to serve Her Majesty in connection with the Metropolitan Police Force. I think, now, I have answered all the points raised by the hon. and gallant Gentleman.

SIR R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): I am very glad indeed to hear a great deal that has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down. When those unfortunate occurrences of the 8th of February took place, soon after the right hon. Gentleman came into Office, it is quite true that the right hon. Gentleman stated what he now tells the Committee with regard to Sir Edmund Henderson, and as to the conduct of the Metropolitan Police Force. But there is no doubt that at that moment the public mind was disturbed in consequence of the occurrences which had taken place, and the words of the right hon. Gentleman did a great deal to allay the apprehension which, undoubtedly, arose in certain quarters. I am very glad to hear that the right hon. Gentleman is now able to confirm what he then said, because since that time he has had an opportunity of investigating generally the conduct and general management of the Metropolitan Police, and has become better acquainted with Sir Edmund Henderson and the services which he has rendered. The right hon. Gentleman was thus able to speak with greater authority; and I, for one, am extremely glad to hear, after the full investigation and after the careful attention which the right hon. Gentleman, I am sure, paid to the question of the Metropolitan Police since he has been in Office, that he is now able to reassure the Committee and the country as to the high character and conduct of Sir Edmund Henderson, and as to the good which he has done in the Force and the services he has rendered to the country. And I am equally glad to hear that the right hon. Gentleman was able to bear that testimony to the general character of the Metropolitan Police Force which we have just heard, because I entirely agree with him that there is no Police Force in any country which can compare in efficiency with the Metropolitan Police Force. We may rest assured, therefore, that the general public get a good return for their money, and have a very efficient force to protect them. No one is better aware than I am of the great number and the variety of the duties which the police have to perform. I have watched the enormous growth of the Force in former years, and I have carefully watched its progress since I have been out of Office. I have seen it develop until it now numbers between 13,000 and 14,000 men. You can scarcely expect that such an army can be officered by a similar number of persons as served to officer it when it was smaller; and I can well believe that there are a great number of questions to go into and to examine very minutely in connection with it. I am glad to find that the Home Secretary will have the assistance of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James) in the investigation which he is going to make. No doubt the country will watch, and I am quite sure the Metropolis will watch, with great interest the proceedings of the inquiry, the Report of which will be looked for with great interest. I am pleased to hear from the right hon. Gentleman that, so far as the new Chief Commissioner is concerned, he has not been in a hurry in entering upon this matter. It was certainly wise on his part to say that he would make no recommendation, and enter into no examination, and that he would not go upon the Committee until he had had time to see what the Force was, and what was required. I hope the Committee itself will approach the subject in the same spirit of caution as the Chief Commissioner, and that they will not think there is occasion for being in a hurry to make their Report, or for making the arrangements or alterations in the Force that are necessary. I thought it only right to make this statement, after what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman, on behalf of the Metropolitan Police Force and Sir Edmund Henderson.

Vote *agreed to.*

(18.) £30,000, to complete the sum for Special Police.

(19.) £852,311, to complete the sum for Police — Counties and Boroughs, Great Britain.

SIR WALTER B. BARTTELOT (Sussex, North-West): I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary when it is likely that the Bill for the superannuation of the Police will be brought in? It is really a very important question. We find now that the expenses are becoming extremely heavy on the county rates. I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say the other day that the Government intend to bring in a Bill which would place the Superannuation Fund as to the Police Force in the same position as the money now granted by the State. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will do that. That was what I understood him to say, and it was a very satisfactory statement, if I am correct. If I am not correct, I am afraid he will find when he brings in the Superannuation Bill that there will be the same opposition to it as there has been to every Superannuation Bill before, because we believe that as half of the cost of pay and clothing and maintaining the police is defrayed by the public, so when the men have done their duty to the county and to the State, only one-half the superannuation payments should fall upon the county, the remainder falling upon the Consolidated Fund.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): The Bill the hon. and gallant Member refers to, and about which I said something in a recent discussion, is in an advanced state of preparation. I have, in fact, been engaged upon it to-day. I promised the House that I would bring it in as soon after Easter as possible, and I will keep my word. The hon. and gallant Gentleman is mistaken if he thinks I said a word as to how the expenses of superannuation would be met. I was very careful not to say anything of the kind. I said it would be a complete Bill, and one which I hoped the House would accept, and I trust that that promise will be adhered to.

SIR WALTER B. BARTTELOT: This is an important question, and one which has taken up a great deal of the time and attention of the country. I think we should have some statement from the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. CHILDERS: When I bring in the Bill I will state what the details are. At the present moment I will make no statement on the subject, either positively or negatively.

Vote *agreed to.*

(20.) £286,644, to complete the sum for Convict Establishments in England and the Colonies.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine) desired to understand whether the Government did not propose to suspend the building of prisons under this Vote until the House had had an opportunity of discussing the matter?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): No, Sir; we have no such intention. The prison at Dover is actually in course of being built, and we have no intention of interrupting the work.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR had understood the Prime Minister to say that the granting of this money in no way committed the House to the building of that prison.

Vote *agreed to.*

(21.) £406,035, to complete the sum for Prisons, England.

MR. RYLANDS (Burnley): I would not like to take precedence of my right hon. Friend the late Home Secretary (Sir R. Assheton Cross) on such a subject as this; but I shall be very glad if he will allow me to make a few remarks, because I am going to make an appeal to him. The Bill under which the management of the prisons was transferred from the county magistrates to the Prisons Board was brought in by the right hon. Gentleman, and I remember that on that occasion I took the opportunity of opposing the right hon. Gentleman, and therefore I have some claim to return to the subject now that we have had experience of the right hon. Gentleman's measure. Now, the right hon. Gentleman himself, who, before he took the more distinguished position of Home Secretary, had had very considerable experience as a county magistrate in the county with which we both have the honour of being connected, knew as well as anybody that the county magistrates were administering the county prisons with great ability and great economy; and I opposed this transfer to the State because I believed they would not be more economically managed, and that the burdens on the taxpayers would be increased; and, in the second place, because I thought it was far better to leave with the county Justices some such real real public duty as this to perform. Now, I want the right hon. Gentleman to say whether the working of the Act which he passed has fulfilled his expectations? [SIR R. ASSHETON CROSS: Yes.] Well, I mean to say that it has not fulfilled the optimist views which he expressed when he brought in the Bill. I recollect that he said that the cost of managing and maintaining these prisons would be reduced; and he persuaded the House that by the transfer we should get the whole thing done for next to nothing. Well, look at what we are doing. It is quite true that the Vote shows a small diminution this year, but that is accounted for by the falling off in the number of prisoners. In reality there is no diminution on this Vote. The charge for prisoners is £27 a-year per head; and the right hon. Gentleman will remember that at Salford and one or two other prisons in the county where he was a county magistrate himself, the cost under the magistrates was only £17 a-year per head. Here we are asked to pay £27 per head where we only had to pay £17 formerly; but that is not all. If you look down below at the bottom of the Vote, you will find this unfortunate item, which I am sorry to say is creeping into all our Votes—"non-effective charge." The non-effective charges have been steadily increasing, and have risen from £6,000 odd to £7,000 odd, and they will, I am sure, go on increasing in a still greater ratio during the next few years. There are other items also which are not included in this Vote, and which must, of necessity, be increasing. Such, for instance, as pensions which are becoming payable. Then I venture to predict that the cost of new buildings and works of all kinds which will be deemed necessary by the Government will go on increasing, for I regret that I have no confidence in the Government administration of such works. What I say is that all Governments are unreliable in regard to the expenditure of public money; and I say with regard to public prisons that Broadmoor was a proof to us that the cost under the Government would be greater than the cost under the county magistrates. Now, there again, one of the items which is increased is for new buildings, alterations, and repairs, the Estimate this year being nearly £4,000 more than last year. Again, the purchase of land is another item which has largely increased. Now, I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman, can he say, on these Estimates, that he has any reason to be satisfied with the alteration which he made in the Act he passed, and have the results reached his expectation? For my part, I doubt the diminution of expenditure, and I doubt the improvement in the administration, and therefore I venture to protest against the transfer which has taken place, although I do not propose, on this occasion, to move the reduction of the Vote.

Sir R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): In reply to the hon. Member, Sir, I can say this, that the expectations which I had when I brought in the Bill many years ago have been in the main fulfilled by experience of the change. It is not much use talking about the figures now, because we have not got them before us, and I am sorry for that reason that this discussion has been brought on so early. I thought, however, that the hon. Gentleman might ask some questions on this subject, and therefore I asked Sir Edmund Du Cane to prepare some figures on the matter, and he kindly undertook to supply me with the necessary statistics, but they have not yet come to my hand. But still, from the correspondence which I have had on the subject, I can assure the hon. Member that the reduction of charge for the prisons in England is very great indeed, and does quite come up to expectations. I always doubted the accuracy of the accounts kept by the local magistrates, and for this reason. It was easy to know how much they spent; but in different counties they adopted different methods of calculating their receipts, and in a great number of counties the magistrates credited themselves with sums and figures for which there was little foundation when they came to be sifted, and which seemed to have been arrived at on no kind of principle. The question of the cost of a prison is different from that of prison earnings, and I do not think that I am quite satisfied as to the amount of prisoners' earnings apart from their cost; but I am certain that their earnings will go on improving; and of one thing I am quite certain, and that is that in calculating the earnings of prisoners everything is done in the most rigid manner, and not a single thing is put down to the earnings of the prisoners that ought not to be. In fact, I can say that the accounts of prisoners' earnings are kept in a far more rigid manner than they were when the prisoners were under the control of the county magistrates. The hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands) will allow me to say that he and I have the privilege to be connected with a county which is celebrated for its finance, and I admitted at the time when I brought in the Bill that if all the accounts were kept and all the prisons were managed as those in the county of Lancaster, there would have been no necessity for the Bill at all. But when the hon. Member points out that in that county the cost of prisoners was only £17 per head, I would point out to him that there were other counties in which the cost was as much as £40 a-head, and others in which the cost was £30 per head. I am more satisfied, however, that the discipline in the prisons generally is much improved, and even though that improvement has had to be purchased at an increased cost, I am sure the country would be willing to incur the charge again. The last time this matter was discussed several authorities, including the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt) and the right hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. Hibbert), admitted that they were agreeably disappointed with the results of the measure, and there could not have been stronger testimony to its success than was then volunteered. But I was rising, Sir, for a totally different purpose than the discussion of these matters. I was rising to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) whether he does not think that the time has now come to consider, at all events, the advisability of amalgamating the Commissioners of Prisons with the Directors of Convict Prisons, and whether a great saving might not be effected if those two Departments were amalgamated? The matter came before me just before I left Office; but I decided that I required more information, and that the matter required more inquiry than I could give to it. I am not at all certain whether it is not worth while considering whether something of the kind cannot be done, although I should be very sorry to recommend it upon the slight amount of information which I have. I should, therefore, like to be allowed to suggest the matter to the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, and to ask him to inquire into it. With reference to the observations of the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands), I am satisfied that if the hon. Member likes to move for a Return relating to the five years preceding the Acts, and the five years subsequent to their passing, it will be found that the results are most gratifying, and bear me out in what I have said.

SIR WALTER B. BARTTELOT (Sussex, North-West): I think the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Childers) should very carefully consider the suggestion which has been made by my right hon. Friend (Sir R. Assheton Cross), because I think he will find that very grave doubts may arise in the matter, and legislation of such importance as that should not be passed without very careful consideration. I opposed the Act of my right hon. Friend as strongly as the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands); but all that has gone by now, and it appears to me that it is no use referring to what we did years ago. What we have to do is to make the present system as good as possible. When my right hon. Friend refers to the cost of prisoners per head under the county magistrates being £40 and £30, of course that was so in some cases; but it was only in the case of very small prisons where they were obliged to keep a large staff, and only had a few prisoners. With regard to prison labour, I would call attention to the fact that there is a diminution of £1,000 in the amount put down in the Estimate for this year. That was one of the questions which was raised by my right hon. Friend the late Home Secretary (Sir R. Assheton Cross), and, for my part, I think the earnings of the prisoners appear to be small, considering what the expenditure is upon the gaols. I trust the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will go into this matter, because it does seem to be a most important one.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I will not detain the Committee by entering into the question which has been raised by the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands). It appears to me that the right hon. Gentleman (Sir R. Assheton Cross) made out a very good *primâ facie* case in support of his Bill, and he will not find me amongst the opponents of what has been already done. I do not believe that any figures on the subject of the former expenditure upon the gaols are in any way reliable; but I have the figures since they have been in the hands of the Government, and I am glad to say that they show a steady diminution in the charges. I am afraid, however, that there will be an increase in the Superannuation Charge, and, perhaps, there will be an increase under a few other heads. With respect to the question of the amalgamation of the two Prison Departments, I took some part in the discussion when the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman was introduced; and with the permission of the right hon. Gentleman I was in communication on the subject with Sir Edmund Du Cane, as I was much interested in the financial and administrative effect of the measure. Without going into details, I must say that I think everyone must feel that to carry on two branches of the same Department with two different sets of officers, is scarcely an economical or business-like arrangement. One of the first questions which came before me, when I took Office a few months ago, was whether the time had not come when something in the direction of amalgamation should be done; and all I have now to say is that the matter is at present under consideration, and that I shall study it with the very gravest attention. In regard to the diminution in the estimated proceeds of prison labour which was pointed out by the hon. and gallant Baronet opposite (Sir Walter B. Barttelot), the subject is a very important one, and I thank the hon. and gallant Baronet for having mentioned it. It is true that there is a diminution of £1,000; but then it must be borne in mind that the number of prisoners has been reduced in a still larger proportion. It is important that we should reasonably utilize prison labour in the manner best suited for the public advantage, interfering as little as possible with outside trade; and all I have to say is that the matter shall have our very best attention.

Vote *agreed to.*

(22.) £210,852, to complete the sum for Reformatory and Industrial Schools in Great Britain.

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): No doubt, the attention of the right hon. Gentleman has been drawn to the matter to which I am about to refer. I mean the small amount of contribution which has been received from the parents. In 1885-6 the amount received in England and Wales was £17,500, whereas the Estimate for 1886-7 is only £15,000. Now, when we come to remember that the reason of the presence of the children in these schools is owing, in the majority of cases, to the neglect of the parents, because they have not taken care of their children, I think the Government should take care that such neglect is not made a source of emolument to the parents, and that they should be made to pay as much as possible. I do not think that sufficient care has been taken to collect the contribution due from the parents; and I do hope that some trouble will be taken to prevent this decrease falling off further. I will not say any more on this point now, but I earnestly trust that it will occupy the attention of the Government. In their Report of last year, the Royal Commission, dealing with these schools, made suggestions with regard to this matter; but I believe the question is still in abeyance. I hope, however, that the attention of the Government will be directed to the subject, and that the Report of the Committee will no longer be allowed to remain ineffective. It is satisfactory to find from the Inspectors' Report of last year that the schools are well conducted and their progress satisfactory; but there was one most important suggestion made by them, in which I think they followed the recommendation of the Royal Commission, and that was that the managers of these schools should have certain powers of guardianship, and should be allowed to apprentice children, or place them in homes at the expiration of their time, where they can receive a careful training, instead of being returned in all cases, and of necessity, to their parents. The parents are sometimes very unsafe people to send the children back to; and, therefore, these managers should have some powers of guardianship. Then, I think, there is great force in the recommendation that a change should be made in the system of classification—that there should be a distinction between reformatory schools on the one hand, and industrial and truant schools on the other. It seems to me, as it does to the Inspectors, that school boards should have nothing to do with industrial schools. Their business is to deal with truant children, and not to mix themselves up in industrial schools; and I trust that the superintendence of school boards will be confined to truant children. It is satisfactory to find that the growth of the cost of industrial schools has been arrested, and that there has been a very considerable decrease in the committals of juvenile offenders under 16 years of age. I find that the number committed in 1861 was 8,801, while in 1884 the number had fallen to 4,879. This appears to prove that we are proceeding on right lines, and that the endeavours which have been made to train up these children by wholesome discipline have been satisfactory, and that recruits to the miserable army of crime have greatly and most satisfactorily diminished in number. It is quite necessary that these points should be brought before the Committee, because the grants to these schools are, after all, very considerable. I see the total cost of industrial schools, according to the last Report was £370,000, the grant made from the Treasury being £183,000. With reference to reformatory schools, the total cost was £127,000, and the amount paid by the country £85,000. Therefore, seeing that the country is paying so large a sum in aid of these schools, it does appear to me, even on financial grounds, to be of great importance that larger sums should be collected from the parents. It is, however, on the educational and moral side of this question that I would impress upon the Committee the great importance of exacting from parents a fair proportion of the cost of the maintenance of their children in these schools.

BARON DIMSDALE (Herts, Hitchin): Upon this matter I am desirous of bringing under consideration another point—namely, whether it would not be possible to throw all the expenses of reformatories entirely upon the Imperial Exchequer, and whether it is not a charge which could be made consistently with the Prisons Act of, I think, 1876? Now that we are suffering from such general distress, it is important that every charge of which the localities can be relieved should be imposed upon the National Exchequer. No charge which can be defrayed out of Imperial resources ought to be put upon the rates. I say this because in the Prisons Act I remember a clause especially exempting reformatories, and stating that they ought to be thrown as a charge upon the rates, and that they are not to be placed in the same position as prisons. On the ground that these places partake of that character, I think it is time that this measure of relief should be afforded by the Government. When I ask this, I ask it, I say, on the ground that it is in accordance with the Prisons Act passed some years ago.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine): I should like to know if the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary can inform me why this charge, so far as it relates to Scotland, is continued under the Home Office? I thought it was decided when the Office of Secretary for Scotland was established that all Home Office duties should be referred to him, and necessarily that the charges should be administered by him. I still, however, find some of these charges under the Home Office. With regard to the merits of this Vote, I would call attention to the fact that the sum paid by the parents of the children in Scotland is higher than the sum paid by parents in England. That appears to me to be very anomalous. I merely draw the attention of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate to it to know whether or not I am right.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): The question raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire (Baron Dimsdale) is one I am not competent to deal with. It has never come before me, either as Chancellor of the Exchequer or as Home Secretary, and I do not think I could deal with it in any way. As to the point raised by the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. F. S. Powell), I will, in the first place, say that I cannot absolutely undertake to bring in a Bill this year for dealing either wholly or partly with the question discussed by the Royal Commission. The whole of the evidence has not been very long in our hands, and though I have read the Report, I cannot say that I am in possession of sufficient information to enable me to draft a Bill to recommend to the House of Commons. Several of the recommendations made by the Royal Commission of which the hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster was so valuable a Member, and upon which we had the assistance of other high authorities, ought to become law. My impression is that the whole subject ought to be dealt with by the Government when it brings in a Bill on the subject, and though, as I have said, I am prepared at some period to bring in a Bill, I do not think it can be introduced this Session. I think I used the same words in answering a Question upon this subject some days ago. Then my hon. Friend referred to the general aspect of the Vote and the amount recovered from parents, and he pointed out that that amount is not sufficient. This year, I think, the amount so recovered is less than last year. Well, it must be remembered that the class from which these children come is an extremely poor class. They come from the dangerous classes, who are not such as it is possible to hope can contribute largely towards the support of their children, whom it is clear that, in a great majority of cases, they have not kept. This is not a class from which we can expect to receive large sums, particularly at the present time, when a great fall in wages has taken place; but I think the Committee ought to be satisfied that we are moving in the right direction. The children who are now the subjects of treatment in reformatory schools are, as a rule, the children of parents brought up in ignorance. But we are shaping very rapidly into another state of things, and parents of the same class from whom we receive many of these children in 10 or 15 years from now, or even in much less time, will be much better instructed, and will be of a class containing a much smaller percentage of criminals than are found in it at present. Therefore, my own personal opinion is that, with the improvements in the management of the schools, and considering the class from which the children come, we shall have, before very long, not only a very considerable economy brought about, but a smaller proportion of children to send to these schools. That is my own individual opinion, and I know it is the opinion of others who have looked more deeply into the subject than I have been able to do. There can be no doubt that, at the present moment, children are sent to these schools in large numbers; but I think the number will fall off in years to come, and that it will be very much owing to measures for the improvement in the condition of the people passed by this House. The question of the contributions of parents is an important one; but I do not think that at the present moment we can expect to increase them. As time goes on we may expect to do so.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): In reply to the hon. and gallant Member (Sir George Balfour), I have to say that it will be, perhaps, in his recollection that, when the Bill for the appointment of the Secretary for Scotland was before this House, it was explained that it had been considered by the Government, as, indeed, it was again considered by the House, what would be the proper place at which to draw the line between matters of lay administration transferred to the Secretary and matters of criminal concernment that were to remain with the Office of Lord Advocate. It was explained at that time to the House—I think it was made a matter for consideration, at any rate—whether reformatory and industrial schools fell under the one category or the other; and the view taken by the Government was that, as the Secretary of State had a great deal to do with these children—very similar to what he has to do with criminals in the matter of remitting sentences, and so on—it would be better, on the whole, that the reformatory and industrial schools should remain with him as before. Economy of administration may have had something to do with it; but the real reason why these institutions remained with the Secretary of State is what I have described.

General Sir GEORGE BALFOUR: The right hon. and learned Gentleman has not answered the question I addressed to him as to why it is that the parents of these children in Scotland pay more than the parents in England?

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I do not know whether what the hon. and gallant Member states is the fact; but, even if it is, I am afraid that this question does not come within my province. I am not aware that the Scotch parents pay more than the English.

Vote *agreed to.*

(23.) £24,282, to complete the sum for the Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum.

(24.) £54,356, to complete the sum for the Lord Advocate and Criminal Proceedings, Scotland.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): Before making a few remarks upon this Vote, I would say that the Scotch Members have some reason to complain that these important Scotch Votes should be brought up the first night after the Recess. It was not expected that they would be brought forward at this time; and the consequence is that very few Scotch Members are present. There is a very marked contrast between the consideration that is given to Irish Members with respect to Votes relating to Ireland and that given to Scotch Members in regard to Scotch Votes. I should be very glad if the Secretary to the Treasury or the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate could still see his way to postpone these Votes. There are certain questions arising under some of them in which some of the Scotch Members are very much interested. One important matter to which I wish to call attention is that with respect to Procurators Fiscal. There has often been a desire expressed by Scotch Members that Procurators Fiscal should be confined to the discharge of the duties of their office. It is considered, and must be felt as an anomaly, that Public Prosecutors in Scotland should be engaged in general law business, in the course of which occasions might arise when their interest to their clients and their duty to the Crown might to some extent be at variance. That has been, I believe, to a very large extent, or, at least, to some extent, the cause of difficulties which have arisen in the Western Highlands with respect to the administration of the law. I can only say that, from information I have received, very great dissatisfaction is felt in the Western Highlands with the administration of the law by the officials of the Crown. In some cases, at least, the Public Prosecutor representing the Crown is also the factor or law agent for the proprietors of the district. Now, when agrarian questions are coming very much to the front, there is very great reason to fear that Procurators Fiscal so placed may not be able to act with perfect impartiality in the questions coming before them. At all events, the position is one which no one should be called upon to occupy. I am, therefore, very anxious to hear from the Lord Advocate what has been the result of his endeavour to get Procurators Fiscal in those districts to confine themselves exclusively to the representation of the Crown, and not to engage in other business. In the earlier part of the Session the Lord Advocate, in reply to a Question put to him, informed me that negotiations were in progress, and I now wish to know if these negotiations have been completed, or whether there is a prospect of their being completed, and whether, if he does not expect soon a reasonable settlement of any difficulty which may have arisen, he will undertake, on behalf of the Government, to bring in a Bill so as to give the Government of the day greater control over Procurators Fiscal than they have at present? The condition of matters at present is certainly unsatisfactory; and when there is every prospect—I am sorry to say it—of agrarian disturbances extending throughout Scotland, it is most important that the administration of law, particularly in respect of agrarian questions, should be with someone who is in an independent position, and not connected with the landlords of the district where he acts. I shall be prepared to move the reduction of some of the salaries of Procurators Fiscal, unless I get a satisfactory explanation from the Lord Advocate as to the progress that is being made with the negotiations that have been commenced with the view of restricting certain Procurators Fiscal in the Western Districts to represent the Crown only. I think we ought also to have an assurance from Her Majesty's Government that, in filling up new appointments, they should endeavour as much as possible to have it stipulated—to lay it down as a condition to taking office—that Procurators Fiscal should confine themselves strictly to the representation of the Crown, and not engage in private business.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): My hon. Friend said something at the outset with respect to these particular Votes for Scotland being taken this evening; but I am not aware that the slightest indication was given, either to the Secretary to the Treasury or to anyone else, that there was any desire that they should not be taken. I would point out that they belong exactly to the same category as the Votes that have just been gone through for England, and I am quite sure that the taking of the Scotch Votes is not in the least meant as any discourtesy to my hon. Friends from North of the Tweed. In regard to the matter raised by my hon. Friend in debate, it has been very often my duty to say something on that point, so that I shall not feel it necessary to do so again. I have more than once stated during our tenure of Office that the Government have gone a great deal in the direction my hon. Friend pointed out—more, I think, than has ever been done by any previous Government; and wherever it has been possible to get a good man to undertake the duties, and to limit himself to those duties where there is adequate employment and adequate salary, we have always followed that course, though the appointment is not with the Crown, but with the Sheriff, subject to the confirmation of the Secretary of State. I do not think we have ever found any difficulty in that respect, where there was adequate work and where adequate salary could be obtained. In regard to those particular cases in the Western Highlands that have been referred to, it is the fact that in the case of three—Stornoway, Portree, and Loch Bay, which, I think, cover the whole of the ground referred to by my hon. Friend—we did make proposals and had communications with those gentlemen as to whether arrangements could be made by which they would confine themselves to their public duties alone; and although these arrangements are not completed, I think I may say that there is every prospect of their being so. At all events, with regard to one of these gentlemen with whom I had communication, his son came up to London a few days ago to have an interview on the subject, and we received a letter dated the 24th of April explaining the terms on which this gentleman would be prepared to give up certain private practice. I do not think it would be practicable to state the terms suggested in that letter; but when I have said this much I have indicated that the matter has been taken up, and I hope that these negotiations may be carried to a satisfactory conclusion. As to what has been said about a Bill, I have, in answer to a Question, stated that in the event of those negotiations failing the Government, I think, may consider whether it would not be proper to introduce a Bill giving power to have a settlement effected, even if there should be an unwillingness on the part of those gentlemen to agree. I hope that will not be necessary. It is very desirable that in those particular localities there should be a severance of private and public business. Without giving a pledge on the part of the Government that they will introduce such a Bill, I say that if the negotiations fail I will certainly recommend to the very serious consideration of the Government whether such a Bill should not be prepared. With respect to the prospect of agrarian disturbances spreading over Scotland generally, I hope there is no such prospect. I have no reason to believe that there is. I have more faith in the qualities of the great bulk of my countrymen than to believe that there is any such fear.

General Sir GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine): I would suggest that the Estimate should show the number of Procurators Fiscal paid by fees, and the number paid by salary. If that were done year by year, we should see whether there is a decrease in the number continuing private practice as well as their public duties.

Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: I am under the impression that there is a Return on that subject—that the information the hon. and gallant Gentleman asks for really exists in the form of a document laid on the Table of the House. I would point out that where you are making an estimate of fees you necessarily cannot predict what they will amount to. They vary from year to year with the amount of work done, so that while it is right that there should be a Return containing the information asked for, it will never be possible to state what the sum will be; but, averaging one year with another, the Treasury may fairly estimate an amount.

General Sir GEORGE BALFOUR: In order to meet the Lord Advocate's plea as to the difficulty of entering in the Estimates a detailed statement of the fees paid to the several officers, that the sums received by each be shown in the credited accounts.

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I only rise to state in a single word the great satisfaction I feel at the statement made by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate to the effect that there is a chance of a Bill being brought in to settle this question once for all, and to prevent Procurators Fiscal from taking private practice in the future. I have always supported the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) on this question on previous occasions, and I shall be glad to do so again. I am glad to hear that a Bill is likely to be brought in to effect this important alteration in the law.

Vote *agreed to.*

(25.) £58,921, to complete the sum for Courts of Law and Justice, Scotland.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): This is the only opportunity we shall have of calling attention to the administration of justice in the Western Highlands of Scotland, and I am sure if some of my Friends who represent that district had been present to-night they would have been able to bring the matter more strongly before the Committee than I am in a position to do. I wish specially to direct the attention of the Committee to a complaint made against Sheriff Ivory last year. Formal complaints were made—detailed statements—with respect to his conduct at the Post Office in Portree, and his demand to the officials for the disclosure of the contents of telegrams. Scotch Members who have taken a particular interest in this matter have never been satisfied that there has been any real investigation into the complaints made. Those complaints were made on affidavits, sworn by respectable householders—by persons who were, to some extent at least, witnesses of the conduct of the Sheriff. Great indignation was expressed in the district and in other parts of Scotland at the conduct of the Sheriff in having endeavoured, as it was alleged he had endeavoured, to intimidate the Post Office officials into giving him the information he desired. The Crown has dealt, I believe, with one official in Portree in a very summary manner. I am not going, at present, to find fault with the authorities for the dismissal of that person. His dismissal may or may not have been justified; but I think we are entitled to ask that justice should be meted out to the superior as to the inferior officials, and I ask the Lord Advocate to be informed, as we have a right to be informed, whether there was a special investigation into the allegations made against Sheriff Ivory, and if so to state to the Committee the result of that investigation? If otherwise, I shall feel it my duty to move the reduction of the Vote by the amount of the salary of Sheriff Ivory.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): This matter was mentioned on a previous occasion. It so happened the occasion was one of the very few occasions, after I left Office last year, on which I was not in the House. I was, however, in the House when the Vote for Law and Justice was taken, so as to be ready to make any answer that might be required of me in regard to any matter affecting the administration of law during the time that we held Office. On that occasion—I think in the end of June or in the beginning of August of last year—the Vote passed without any observation whatever or without any question whatever being raised in regard to the conduct of Sheriff Ivory. This question is a somewhat old one, though I do not complain of that; I only wish to impress upon hon. Members that when the Vote for Law and Justice was brought forward last year I was sitting in my place ready to give any explanation in regard to it, although we had then left Office. Now, if I were to go into the entire history of what has taken place in the Island of Skye during the last two or three years, I am afraid I should take up far too much of the time of the Committee. I understand my hon. Friend the Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) confines his inquiry to what occurred in connection with the Post Office. In order to make the matter thoroughly intelligible, it would be necessary, if I were to go fully into the matter, to make reference to the condition of the Island at the time, and to the many very difficult and delicate duties it fell to the lot of the Sheriff to discharge—duties more difficult and more delicate, I think, than it has ever become the duty of a Sheriff in our time to discharge, and to which Sheriff Ivory devoted a great deal of time and anxious attention and consideration. But as the hon. Gentleman has limited his complaint to the proceedings at the Post

Office, I may, perhaps, be allowed to say that Sheriff Ivory gave at the time a very full statement as to what occurred, and, without wearying the Committee, I may simply say that he had been down in the Island of Skye completing an investigation of a very delicate character, having relation chiefly, although not exclusively, to the case of the gentleman to whom my hon. Friend referred, who had been the Sheriff's clerk of the place. In the course of the investigation, Sheriff Ivory found that one of the servants of a Public Department had been made use of to convey telegrams and communications to persons in various parts of the Island, advising them to resist the officers of the law. On the Monday morning, before coming away, the Sheriff did go into the Post Office, and asked the Postmaster there whether he had received any communication directing him not to take part in the kind of proceedings it was alleged he had taken part in. There had already been a good deal of previous investigation into the conduct of that particular Postmaster, and, under these circumstances, the Sheriff did go to the Post Office to inquire whether any communication had been received by the Postmaster from his immediate and direct superiors in respect to matters which had been previously the subject of investigation. So far as my information goes, there was nothing in the actions of the Sheriff which could be characterized as intimidation. Certainly, the Sheriff did feel it his duty to point out to the Postmaster that the conduct of which he was charged with being guilty might lead to investigation. It was said that there had been a violation of the Post Office Regulations, and in respect to that I ought to explain that the state of the Post Office at that place had been such that the Surveyor General supplied the Sheriff with a private telegraphic clerk. There is no doubt that the Sheriff did go into what is called the instrument room. Had he not done so he would have been obliged to make his inquiry in the open shop—a small shop which served as the Post Office—which was hardly the kind of place to conduct the investigation with which he was charged. It certainly did not appear to me originally, and it does not appear to me now, that there is any ground whatever for the complaint made with regard to the action of the Sheriff upon the occasion in question.

General Sir GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine): I hope my hon. Friend the Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) will not think it necessary to go to a division. What has taken place will, it is to be trusted, serve as a lesson to all public servants not to meddle with the Post Office. I rose, however, to call attention, as I have done on previous occasions, to the largeness of the judicial establishment which is kept up, not only in Scotland, but in England and Ireland. It has always appeared to me that the establishments are much larger than the population or the work justifies, and I am sure the country would be pleased to hear from the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) that steps would be taken to insure economy in this direction. Then, again, there is an item here to defray the expenses incurred by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests. Why do not they bear their own expenses; surely they are quite capable of doing so? There is, too, another charge in this Vote which I have often mentioned; it is that of £900 for the drafting of Bills to be introduced in Parliament. I never could make out how this £900 was made up. Perhaps the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) will be able to afford us some information upon the point?

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I should like to know whether any independent investigation was made into the truth of the charges preferred against Sheriff Ivory, or whether the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate simply asked the Sheriff for an explanation of the action he took? I think the public are entitled to have some independent examination, altogether apart from Sheriff Ivory's own statement. I wish to know whether the Sheriff denied absolutely that he had asked the telegraph clerk and the postmaster for information respecting the telegrams which had been sent out of the office? That is the point in respect to which I wish to have definite information from the Lord Advocate. I do not desire to press the case unduly against Sheriff Ivory. I am aware he was placed in a very difficult and trying position; but the public ought to be satisfied that the same supervision is exercised over Sheriffs in the discharge of their duties as is exercised over minor officials.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: Certainly there was no separate investigation, and I do not think the circumstances of the case called for one. Some of the persons who were interested were subjected to investigation and inquiry; but I certainly think there was nothing whatever to justify Sheriff Ivory, a judicial officer, being, so to speak, put on his trial. The hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Kincardineshire (Sir George Balfour) has asked for an explanation in regard to an item of £900 which appears in this Vote. It is a sum which may or may not be used, but which is put annually at the disposal of the Lord Advocate in the matter of drafting Bills. Most of the Scottish Bills are drafted by the Lord Advocate's legal secretary. Sometimes, however, the assistance of other persons is obtained. I do not think that while I have been in Office the sum has ever been exhausted. I recollect that once, when, in regard to very important measures, there was a very great deal of labour by persons not connected with the official staff, and all awards were made out of this sum. As far as I recollect, about 500 guineas of this sum has been appropriated by my Department. But that has not been for the drafting of Bills only, but for going over a very large number of Bills which may or may not affect Scotland, for making amendments in a great many Bills, and for reporting upon a large number of others. But, as I have said, although the sum appears in the Vote, it does not necessarily follow that it is expended. I believe the sum appropriated towards the drafting of Scottish Bills is relatively very much less than the sum appropriated for drafting either English or Irish Bills. Instead of having a regular staff of draftsmen it has been the custom for the Lord Advocate's private secretary to do whatever drafting is required. With regard to the question of the hon. and gallant Gentleman (Sir George Balfour) concerning the expenses incurred by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, I may say that the system observed is that the Commissioners pay into the Treasury the gross sums they receive from the Royal domains, and that then the Treasury pay out the expenses incurred. It is thought that this is preferable to allowing the Commissioners to deduct their expenses, and to pay into the Treasury only the net sum. There was a time when it was thought—I do not say without some ground—that there was something very like meddlesomeness in the administration of the Department; but I think those familiar with the details of the Department will know that it is not so now, and that there has been an endeavour for some time to compound some of the claims made, and to reduce the cost of management.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR: As the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate has said that the sum paid into the Treasury by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests is the gross and not the net sum, I will ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he can state what the net sum is?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): My right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate has correctly stated the case. It is most unsound to allow any Department to deduct their expenses from the receipts. The rule of the Treasury is that the gross receipts shall come in. If the Commissioners were allowed to deduct their expenses we should have no control over them.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): It is well the Committee should be able to exercise some control over the expenditure by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests. Perhaps the Lord Advocate will inform the Committee in what kind of prosecutions this money has been expended. I know that several very poor but deserving men in my own constituency have been treated very hardly by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests in respect to unexhausted teinds. These men had taken up pieces of moor land, and had reclaimed them. The Crown allowed their claim to remain dormant for 200 years, or nearly so, and then came down upon these feuars, claiming one-fifth of the annual value of the land for teinds. The action of the Crown was manifestly absurd and unjust. The men were labouring men with very scanty means; but, nevertheless, the Commissioners of Woods and Forests prosecuted them for the payment of teinds—not only for existing teinds, but for teinds in arrear. I should like to know whether any part of this expenditure was incurred in carrying on those prosecutions? Moreover, the Commissioners of Woods and Forests refused to compound these cases for any smaller number of years' purchase than the cases in which the claim of the Crown had been known all along. These were felt to be very hard cases; and perhaps the Lord Advocate will be able to say whether any of this money has been spent in respect of them.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I am unable to say whether any part of this money was applied to the particular cases my hon. Friend (Mr. J. W. Barclay) referred to, for I did not hear the hon. Gentleman mention the name of the place in which the cases occurred. [MR. J. W. BARCLAY: Little Brechin.] Hardship is, no doubt, sometimes done in the prosecution of these claims. It is a very painful duty on the part of those who represent the Crown to prefer such claims; but it is obvious to the Committee that it would not do to allow the Crown, which in this matter means the public, to suffer by any oversight of its officers. The Department has every disposition to settle the claims. [MR. J. W. BARCLAY: I hold the contrary.] I must repeat that at the present time there is every disposition to settle matters as well as they can be reasonably settled, with due and fair regard to the interests of the Crown, which are, as I have said, the interests of the public.

Vote *agreed to.*

(26.) £30,862, to complete the sum for the Register House Department, Edinburgh.

(27.) £147,037, to complete the sum for Police—Counties and Burghs, Scotland.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): Before this Vote is passed I should like to call the attention of the Home Secretary (Mr. Childers) or the Secretary for Scotland to the increase in the cost of the Scotch Constabulary. The increase in the cost this year is £4,000, and the increase in the number of constables 52. It is very disappointing to find that notwithstanding the improvement in the morals and habits of the people of Scotland the number of constables is being continually increased. I should like the Home Secretary, or the Secretary for Scotland, if the matter is within his control, to exercise a strict supervision over the number of constables employed and the cost of the Police Force. I had occasion recently to inquire into the circumstances of my own county, and I found that the expenditure had increased so much that the county benefited very little from the proportion which was paid by the Government. I have not the figures at command at the present moment; but, speaking from memory, I say that although the contribution by the Imperial Parliament has been increased within the last 10 years from one-quarter to one-half, the county I have the honour to represent has benefited extremely little, if any, by the increased subsidy. Now, I wish to press upon whoever is responsible the necessity for the exercise of very great vigilance and control over the increased cost of the police and over the increase of the number of men employed. The system which is in force requires an Inspector to go round and report upon the efficiency of the police. This system leads to increased expenditure. The Inspector naturally wishes to have the police in the highest state of efficiency; and he feels that the increased efficiency of the force, as he regards it, cannot be obtained without increased expenditure. An excuse for the increased expenditure is found in the fact that the Government pay one-half. This increased subsidy for the police is an alarming feature of our expenditure. It has increased not only the Imperial expenditure, but the local expenditure.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): It may be taken for granted that the very important matter which the hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. W. Barclay) has referred to was by no means left out of view. Although the sum of £4,000, being the increase from £143,000, to £147,000, is not proportionately a very large increase, it must be kept in mind that the population and the wealth of Scotland are rapidly increasing. Even if there had been no particular reason for this increase, the fact that every year there are so many more persons to watch over might account for it. But I understand that this particular increase is due in part to the additional police of last year and this—the charges for these additions have only now become fully developed—and in part to the adoption of a higher scale of pay, but particularly to a certain heavy charge, £1,861, not of an annual character, in the cost of clothing of the City of Glasgow Police. Therefore, very nearly one-half of the whole figure is of a very exceptional character. I dare say not many hon. Members will dispute what my hon. Friend said with regard to the effect of the subsidies from the Public Exchequer. It is a matter of familiar knowledge to the Committee that the Prime Minister has, more than once, pointed out that the system of grants in aid from the central funds to local funds leads to extravagance of cost. The locality thought it had got so much to spend, and proceeded to spend it lightly, with the result that to the locality there is very little saving in the end. Accordingly it has been matter for consideration, and, no doubt, will become matter for consideration under any local government scheme, whether something else should not be substituted for a system which, according to experience, has proved to be rather delusive, and which has added to the general burdens.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine) asked whether the sums so voted for certain branches of administrative details ought not to be placed in the hands of the Secretary for Scotland?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): Personally, I am of opinion that the Secretary for Scotland should have entire control of all matters relating to Scotland. At the present moment that is not so, in consequence of the manner in which the Act creating the Office of Secretary for Scotland was drawn up. There is a little friction between the Home Office and the Secretary for Scotland at the present moment; but that is just what might have been expected. Perhaps the best course for my hon. and gallant Friend (Sir George Balfour) to adopt would be to put a Question on the subject to the Home Secretary or to the First Lord of the Treasury.

Vote *agreed to.*

(28.) £93,876, to complete the sum for Prisons, Scotland.

(29.) £8,559, to complete the sum for the Court of Bankruptcy, Ireland.

(30.) £1,085, to complete the sum for the Admiralty Court, Registry, Ireland.

(31.) £83,057, to complete the sum for Reformatory and Industrial Schools, Ireland.

(32.) £5,255, to complete the sum for the Dundrum Criminal Lunatic Asylum, Ireland.

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow.*

Committee to sit again upon *Wednesday.*

CUSTOMS AND INLAND REVENUE BILL.

(*Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

[BILL 190.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir William Harcourt.*)

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, he wished to draw attention to the unequal manner in which the Income Tax was levied under the existing system. If some persons successfully evaded the tax, that was no reason why others should be called upon to pay in excess. There were many cases in which the Income Tax was not clearly defined, and on which Income Tax was paid to a higher amount than the income actually received. The Bill provided that the tax should be levied on profit or gain; but he knew an instance where a tradesman, having made for two years a loss and for three years a profit of only £8 a-year, had had during that time to pay Income Tax at the rate of about £50 a-year. Another tradesman, who had become bankrupt owing to bad trade, had been charged Income Tax up to the very last year on £3,000 per annum. Cases of this sort were very numerous, and he thought something ought to be done to prevent their recurrence in future. One institution with which he was connected afforded a typical instance. A Company had been started to establish an institution for the education of women, and it had succeeded. They had set sums aside for depreciation of property—such as leases and of furniture—and these were treated as income by the collector. But in this particular instance the first collector for the first five years had made an abatement for these items; the second collector, in the succeeding five years, would not allow any abatement on either item; while the third collector, in the third five years, permitted an abatement on only one item—namely, the depreciation of furniture. An Insurance Office with which he was connected always made an annual Return of their income, coupled with the statement that the bulk of their income was derived from investments which already paid too high a rate of Income Tax. If an Insurance Company or a savings bank made no profit at all, the case was harder still when it was called upon to pay Income Tax. A North Country savings bank which held about £400,000 in small deposits paid in Income Tax about £500 a-year, although it made no profits at all. Up to 1878 the Inland Revenue returned to this Company the Income Tax on its investments. The National Penny Bank was established about 11 years ago with philanthropic objects. It had never yet paid its way or paid a dividend, and the shareholders had spent £13,000; and yet they had in the 11 years paid nearly £2,000 in Income Tax, which was the amount that would have been levied on a flourishing business that had earned £72,000. This year the bank would pay £600, although it had not made 1*d*. of profit. This was not taxing income for profits, but it was taxing philanthropic institutions. With regard to house property, he ventured to assert that in London and other large towns a great number of houses were assessed at the present time a good deal above what could be absolutely got for them. One in Blackfriars Road, which was unlet for years, and for which, therefore, no premium was paid, was hired for one of the institutions he had referred to at £140, and was assessed at £154; another was hired at £45, and was assessed at £54. The right of appeal in such a case was practically useless. Rating could not be taken altogether as indicative of value when it was in excess of what property would bring in. If by combination all London were reduced one-tenth on its assessment, that would not damage local rating; but it would enormously reduce the amount London would pay to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) would not be satisfied with such an arrangement. Neither had he the right to claim taxes upon a larger than the real value, even although the house might be rated in excess of that value. There was much property that was only partially let. If it was let for a part of the year the Income Tax was reduced; but if only a part of a house could be let there was no reduction. A house which brought in £53 was assessed at £100, and the tax upon that value was claimed. In another case property brought in £33, and yet paid Income Tax on £100, which was at the rate of 2*s*. in the pound. This plan of charging necessitated the closing of houses that otherwise might be partially let for working-class tenants. Some said that all unlet property ought to be taxed, and he did not say he objected to that in theory. That, however, was a question of itself, and until it was law it was no argument in favour of the present system by which, when property was only partially let, it should be assessed for Income Tax at its whole value. No doubt, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was in great pecuniary difficulties; but a system which made people pay more than they were entitled to was not a system which should be encouraged by the Government. The reason why these excessive demands were made was, to a great extent, that collectors and officials associated with the work of assessment were paid by poundage. This Bill provided for the payment of collectors by a poundage of 1½*d*. He hoped that clause would be amended in Committee. All associations for Income Tax reform objected to the poundage system, as based upon an immoral principle. It admitted personal interest into the determination of the amount of assessment. Men were tempted unwarrantably to increase assessments for their own pocket, and thus taxpayers were individually subjected to unjust charges. Poundage was not payment for efficient services, but for the raising of assessments. The pressure upon officials and collectors was greater with a high tax than with a low one; the poundage produced more when a tax was 8*d*. than when it was 3*d*., and yet it involved no more work or trouble. He trusted the Government would consent to do away with this poundage system. The right of appeal was in most cases a delusion, for the Commissioners were led by the collectors, who understood the rules, and worked them hardly against complaining taxpayers. He had to appeal himself to Somerset House; but although he met with every courtesy nothing came of it. His conviction and that of others concerned was that the whole system of poundage ought to be done away with; that the system by which Local Commissioners were elected should be altered; that the means of appeal should be revised; and also that it should be made clear that the payments of the tax on incomes did not exceed the real amount which the person paying it had earned. The tax was now a permanent one; and, seeing that in a time of peace it was 8*d*. in the pound, it was more than ever necessary that it should be levied in a fair manner.

MR. GREGORY (Sussex, East Grinstead) considered the appeal made by his hon. Friend deserved the earnest consideration of the Government. He (Mr. Gregory) had also to remind the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the promises he received when he brought his Motion forward on the 19th of March. Until this Bill was read a second time he could not place his proposals on the Paper. He believed he could have carried his Motion; but he did not wish to take any step that was hostile to the Government. He trusted that sufficient time would be given between the second reading and the Committee stage to consider his proposals, and fairly and fully discuss them.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby) said, the appeal which had been made to him by his hon. Friend (Mr. Gregory) was a fair one, and the House certainly ought to have an opportunity of seeing his clauses before this Bill passed through Committee. He undertook that that should be so. So long as there was practical protection in the case of reversions and remote contingencies, which did not naturally reveal themselves to the collectors of the taxes, he admitted the principle for which his hon. Friend contended was a perfectly fair one. With reference to the speech of the hon. Member for Islington (Mr. Bartley), he would not go into the details of all the cases alleged; but he could undertake that, if they were laid before him, he would have them carefully examined. He entirely agreed that, onerous as the burden of the Income Tax must be, it was the duty of the Government to see that it was levied without a sense of injustice. It was the interest of the Government, above all, to see that that was done. With regard to the class of cases where it was said a man paid Income Tax where he derived no profits, if a man made high profits the first year, considerable profits the second year, and none the third year, the principle was to take the average. Therefore, in the circumstances of the case, he would gain the advantage; for, suppose it happened that there was a small profit the first year, large profits the second year, and high profits the third year, the average would still be taken on an average of the three years. Though it was considered an apparent injustice, it was fairer to take an average. Then, as to houses, the fair criterion was the actual value of the house. As to the case of the Insurance Offices, he was really not prepared to enter into that until he knew the circumstances. On getting the facts he would carefully examine into them in connection with the officers of the Inland Revenue. In all these cases the principle had been tried out in the Courts, and the officers acted on the principles laid down. As to the question of poundage, the Government officers and collectors were not paid by poundage. The system of poundage only applied to local collectors. There was no desire on the part of the Government to exact a higher rate through that system. When a proposal was made some years ago by the Government to alter the system Members came down, under the pressure of the persons interested in the poundage system in the various localities, and mobbed the Government out of their proposals. If, however, the hon. Member would privately give him a guarantee that they should have a majority in any attempt they might make to alter the system, he would promise him that he would at once set to work to make the endeavour.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, there was one class of property which was felt to be very hardly treated in the matter of Income Tax, and that was mining property. Collieries, in assessing their profits, were not allowed to deduct anything for depreciation, and that was felt to be a great hardship. That class of property was peculiar, because, in many cases, they had minerals which lasted for, perhaps, 20 years, and then were worked out; and, therefore, it was necessary that the whole of the money expended for the purpose of extracting those minerals from the soil should be recouped with interest during those 20 years, and there were really no profits till allowance was made for depreciation of the capital expenditure. He hoped the Government would take that point into their consideration. As the Income Tax was now permanent, it ought to be assessed as fairly as possible. This consideration applied also to the House Tax. At present, where a house was occupied partly for business and partly for residence, the assessment was laid upon the whole house. That was not fair.

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan) said, there was another point which pressed hardly on the owners and lessors of mines. This was that these persons had to pay Income Tax in exactly the same way, and to just the same extent, as if the rent and the property would last for ever, whereas the contrary was the case. That was a point which had been brought before him on many occasions, and it was one that was felt to be a great hardship by many mine owners. He trusted that when any changes was made in the incidence of the Income Tax some relief would be afforded in that matter.

Mr. ROUND (Essex, N.E., Harwich) said, that he was desirous of calling the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the injustice which attended the collection of the Income Tax under Schedule B. He believed that a considerable sum was taken from the pockets of landholders unfairly, upon supposed profits, which had not been made. It was difficult for many occupiers to produce accounts, though he was aware the exemptions were considerable in the case of small occupiers. He should like to ask a question which he had often heard raised, but never answered—namely, on what principle of justice or equity Scotch occupiers of land were assessed, under this Schedule, at a less amount than English occupiers? It was the fact that Englishmen were assessed upon half their rent, where Scotch farmers were only assessed upon one-third. These last few years were times of unexampled depression in the agricultural districts; and he appealed to the right hon. Gentleman to remedy this inequality, by assimilating the assessments in England to those in Scotland.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT said, that, no doubt, the assessments under Schedule B appeared at first sight extremely anomalous in England, Scotland, and Ireland, the charge being made not on the annual profit, but on a certain proportion of the rental. If the hon. Member would look at the 28th Report of the Inland Revenue Department of last year he would find the whole history of the circumstances under which the assessments were made, and would see that the method was introduced at the time when the assessment was first adopted, because it was supposed that farmers at that time did not keep books. Therefore, there was a sort of arbitrary assessment, on the assumption that the profits of the farm bore a certain proportion to the rent. A fraction was taken in England, a different fraction in Scotland, and, he believed, a different fraction in Ireland. But the hon. Member was aware that a person was not bound by that system. If he elected to pay on profits he might do so.

Mr. WARMINGTON (Monmouth, W.) remarked that though all the capital employed in mining operations might be lost, the owner went on receiving his royalty all the same, whether the mine succeeded or not.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

MEDICAL ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—[Bill 163.]

(*Sir Lyon Playfair, Mr. Mundella, The Lord Advocate.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir Lyon Playfair) (Leeds, S.), in moving that the Bill be read a second time, said, he was sorry to remind the House that, since the year 1870, 21 or 22 Bills upon the same subject had been brought before the House; but, owing to the interests affected and the jealousies of different Medical Bodies the measures had all failed. He trusted that the Bill which he now asked the House to consider had removed many, if not all, of the difficulties which previous Bills had met with, and that the House on this occasion might feel itself justified in carrying it through and settling a long and harassing controversy among medical men, who were much disturbed by these Bills being constantly brought forward. There were about 16,000 medical men throughout the country. These medical men came upon the Register and practised through 19 Licensing Bodies. These Bodies were partly made up of the Universities in different parts of the Kingdom, and some of them were Licensing Corporations, such as the College of Surgeons, and the College of Physicians in the three sections of the Kingdom, and the Apothecaries Company. Through any one of these 19 Bodies a medical man could come upon the Register and might practise, and he might receive 50 or 60 titles and licences to practise from these Bodies; and the bewildered public had no idea of what was the value of these—whether they signified a sufficient qualification—which were good and which were bad. Although the public had very little means of judging of the efficiency of these titles, he ought to state at the outset that from the very fact of 21 or 22 Bills having preceded this one in the attempt to reform the Medical Profession very great improvements had taken place in the examinations of the different Licensing Bodies throughout the Kingdom. Still, the law remained in exactly the same state, and a man might—he did not say that it was so—pass a College of Surgeons, and go down to the country and attend medicinal cases—such as measles or scarlet fever—without even having passed a medical examination at all; or he might take a licence by a College of Physicians, and cut a man's leg off without having passed an examination in surgery. Therefore the state of the law—and he was not speaking now of the improved practice—was that, with any single qualification, a surgeon might practise medicine and a physician might practise surgery, and both might go down to the country and, without knowing anything about it, practise in a thickly-populated district midwifery. Since the attempt to reform the Medical Profession the different Medical Corporations had shown a tendency to combine. In England the College of Surgeons and the College of Physicians had combined to have one qualifying examination both in medicine and in surgery; and the House would recollect that Her Majesty, a few days ago, laid the foundation stone of a great Examination Hall, which was to be the conjoint Examination Hall of the two leading Corporations. This was a voluntary combination, and not a statutory one. In Scotland they had done the same thing; but in Ireland they had not yet combined. The College of Surgeons, the College of Physicians, and the Apothecaries' Company in Ireland, all had their separate examinations, without any conjoint examination, so as to cover the whole area of medical knowledge necessary for practice. The leading principle of this Bill was that no man in future could get into the Profession without what he termed a qualifying examination. That examination consisted of this—that a man must pass a thorough examination in medicine, surgery, and midwifery; and with that view the Bill promoted the desire that had been shown by the Profession itself for the Corporations to combine. The Universities, and especially the Scotch Universities, examined both in medicine and surgery. The Bill said that they should continue to give the degrees which they now gave, and which they were enabled by Charter to give. It also said that the Medical Corporations, if they desired to form a qualifying examination, must combine together to give a qualifying examination over the whole area which was considered necessary for the Medical Profession. But there might be injustice arising from this. In London, for instance, there was a Body called the Apothecaries' Company, which gave a very useful class of medical practitioners; and it might be shut out by the two Colleges refusing to take it into their combination. In that case the Medical Council, which was established in 1858 to rule the Profession, would, under the Bill, have power to add a sufficient number of examiners, in order by these additional examiners to secure a qualifying examination to the Apothecaries' Company. The next part of the Bill dealt with the constitution of the Medical Council. That Council was established to regulate the Profession, and see that the examinations were improved. There had been great discontent that while its nominees were appointed by the Crown to that Council, and the Universities and Corporations sent members, there was no popular representation of the large body of practitioners throughout the country. By this Bill they gave four popular representatives to be added to the Council, which representatives would be elected by the whole of the practitioners in the Kingdom—two for England, one for Scotland, and one for Ireland. These representatives would add to the strength of the Medical Council. But they might make all these rules, and the Medical Corporation might not do their duty and secure efficient examinations. The Bill, therefore, would give the Medical Council power to send Inspectors to see that the examinations were sufficient and efficient, and if they found any Body not doing its duty they might disqualify that Body from giving qualifying examinations; but the consent of the Privy Council must be obtained, so that the Body to be disqualified should have full opportunity of showing that they were giving, or were about to give, these examinations in a fit and proper manner. These were the main features of the Bill. It had perplexed medical men that Colonial and foreign practitioners practising in this country were not recognized on the Register. The Bill provided that if they were properly qualified they would be admitted on the Register, provided there were full reciprocity between the Colonies and this country in this respect. Part III. of the Bill contained miscellaneous provisions, some of them being of great importance. One of these provisions was to the effect that in the event of the Medical Council not doing its duty, and not keeping the Corporation and Universities up to the mark, it might be put in default. In that case the Privy Council would step in and establish the necessary rules to secure efficiency. As yet he had heard of no opposition to this Bill from any part of the Kingdom, either from the Universities or the Medical Corporations. Formerly there was great opposition to these Bills; but in 1884, when the last came forward, he moved an Amendment which received the approbation of every Corporation throughout the Kingdom and of all the Universities. It was upon the basis of that Amendment—that was to say, trusting to the Licensing Bodies in combination to do what they wished, and giving the Medical Council full power to enforce efficient examinations—that this Bill had been brought forward, and he believed that the second reading would meet with no opposition from them. He now recommended the Bill to the House in the hope that it might be a settlement of a long-vexed question, and that they might at last obtain the means of getting upon the Register qualified practitioners who were skilled, by their education and by their examinations, in the great branches of the Medical Profession.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*The Vice President of the Council, Sir Lyon Playfair.*)

Sir HENRY HOLLAND (Hampstead) said, he did not rise to oppose the second reading of the Bill, as, from inquiries which he had made, he believed the principle involved in it met with the general approval of all branches of the Profession. Indeed, he ventured to congratulate his right hon. Friend (Sir Lyon Playfair) upon having surmounted the difficulties which had hitherto prevented any advance in reform of the Acts. This he had effected, not by work just done by him since he took Office, but, as they all knew, by work carried on very ably for many years. He (Sir Henry Holland) would only make a few remarks upon that occasion, as he did not wish to stand between the House and others—two of whom he saw on the opposite side of the House—who were more competent to discuss this question. But his right hon. Friend had admitted that some Amendments would have to be made in Committee; and he (Sir Henry Holland), therefore, ventured to bring one or two points under consideration. He could not but express his regret that his right hon. Friend had not seen his way to consolidate the law upon this question. He was, of course, aware that a Consolidation Bill was somewhat more difficult to pass; but in the present case there was, in truth, only one important Act, the Act of 1858, to be dealt with; and he would still urge on his right hon. Friend to consider if he could not in Committee introduce, if not all, at all events a large part of the

Act of 1858 into the Bill, and thus make a larger repeal of that Act than was now proposed. For instance, a person fully acquainted with the subject would know that the General Council only held office for a term of five years under the Act of 1858; but an outsider would suppose, from this Bill, that the great majority of the General Council held for life, and that an invidious distinction was drawn between them, and the members of the Council who are termed "representatives of the Medical Profession," but who are only to hold office for five years. As the whole constitution of the General Council was changed by the Bill, why should not the more convenient course be adopted of stating in the Bill the term of the office of all the members? Again, his right hon. Friend would find other sections of the Act practically incompatible with the provisions of the Bill, or rendered unnecessary, and those should be repealed. Thus Sections 20 to 23 of the Act, which dealt with the representation of defects in the examinations and to the remedies for such defects, would, at all events, if they were not altogether incompatible with the Bill, be rendered unnecessary by slightly adding to the provisions of Clause 4 of the Bill. And, again, Section 24 of the Act was materially altered, so far as regarded the quorum of the Privy Council, by Clause 19 of the Bill. Why should not the rest of Section 24 of the Act be embodied in Clause 19; and then the section could be repealed. There were other cases of that kind; but he did not desire to detain the House by enumerating them. Feeling, however, as he did, very strongly the advantage of consolidation, he begged his right hon. Friend to see if he could not in Committee embody in the Bill more of the Act of 1858, and thus make a larger repeal of it. There was one point of more importance to which he desired to call attention with reference to the Colonial part of the Bill. He entirely approved of the provisions in Part II., and thought they would be acceptable to the Colonies; but there was one provision the justice of which he called in question. By the Act of 31 & 32 *Vict.*, c. 29, with which he had to deal when in the Colonial Office, Colonial Legislatures were given, and rightly given, full power to enforce registration in the Colonies of persons coming there, but who were already registered here under the Medical Act of 1858; the only Proviso being that such persons were not to be subject to examination, but were entitled to be registered on payment of fees. That Act it is proposed to repeal by Clause 25 of this Bill on and after the "appointed day," and the "appointed day" is fixed by Clause 24 to be in June, 1887. Now, that repeal was quite reasonable when applied to Colonies that came in under the Bill, and availed themselves of the advantages of Clause 11, but unreasonable when applied to Colonies that had not done so, and did not desire to do so. The repeal, therefore, should be limited, and confined to the former class of Colonies. With these observations he supported the second reading.

DR. FOSTER (Chester) said, he would support the second reading of the Bill in the interests of a body of 12,000 medical practitioners, who did not, however, support it so cordially as they would have done a larger measure of medical reform, neither could he himself agree that it was in all respects perfectly satisfactory. The Medical Profession, for the last 20 years, had continuously, but so far ineffectually, struggled for the amendment of the Medical Act of 1858; and they naturally felt disappointed to find that, although during that period no less than 20 Bills had been introduced for the purpose of amending that Act, this measure was not wider in its provisions and more sweeping in its reforms. Nevertheless, they could not but recognize that it met two of the main objects for which the Medical Profession had so long struggled. The first was that every medical practitioner in the country should be completely qualified in all the branches of his Profession before being admitted to the legal status; and the other was that the Medical Profession should have a direct representation in the Governing Body. Hitherto they had been taxed to keep up a Medical Council, which had most consistently thwarted their desires, without having been represented in it. When the Act of 1858 was passed, it was said, as a reason for not granting the Profession direct representation, that there was no opportunity of doing so, because there was no register of electors to elect representatives. For more than a quarter of a century the Register had been complete; but the Profession still remained without representation. There had been a good deal said during the last few weeks about taxation without representation; but, although he could not go quite so far as some in what had been said about that principle, he could, nevertheless, as a member of the Medical Profession, heartily sympathize with the views expressed by many of his hon. Friends as to the injustice and impolicy, generally, of any portion of the community being taxed without being represented. The Medical Profession had for 28 years been taxed to keep up a Council in which it had been systematically denied any representation. He was, however, bound to recognize that the Bill under consideration made a considerable concession in that respect; although, when they came to consider the manner in which it was proposed to carry the concession into effect, they would probably be of opinion that its provisions were very inadequate. It was proposed that the Medical Council should consist of 28 members, of whom 13 would represent England, 8 Scotland, and 7 Ireland; but it would be found, on further consideration, that of those 28 members no less than 18 would be the representatives of Universities and Corporations—that was to say, of the very Bodies which it would be the duty of the Council to look after. He could not, therefore, consider that it was very fair to the members of the Profession, who would have to find the money to keep up the Medical Council, that they should only have four representatives out of the whole number of 28 members. In his opinion, that number might be very fairly increased at the expense of the Crown nominees, who were originally appointed in place of the direct representation of the Profession. He also thought the three parts of the United Kingdom were disproportionately represented in the proposed Council, having regard to the medical constituency of each part. England, with 16,978 practitioners, was to have only two directly-elected representatives; Scotland, with 2,372, one representative; and Ireland, with 2,501, also one representative. In Committee he should propose to alter that, as he thought, in the case of England, it was unfair and inadequate. England ought to have four, and the other countries one each. Altogether, including the Corporate Bodies, as the Bill stood, Ireland would have seven and Scotland eight representatives out of the 28. But, after all, the right hon. Gentleman (Sir Lyon Playfair) was to be congratulated for having produced a measure which had in its simplicity and modesty its best recommendations, and he (Dr. Foster) had much pleasure in supporting it.

Dr. R. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) said, he had great pleasure in congratulating his right hon. Friend (Sir Lyon Playfair). The Bill would be a memorable feature of his right hon. Friend's tenure of Office if, after the 22 unsuccessful attempts made by other people, he succeeded at last in placing this difficult and perplexing question on a sound legislative basis. A good deal of exaggeration had been brought forward in support of this class of legislation, and imputations had been made against many Medical Corporations—and more especially those of Scotland—which were not borne out by the fact, and certainly not by the Blue Book of the Select Committee; but it was certainly an anomalous state of things that 19 Examining Bodies should be allowed to compete for the right of conferring a qualification on a practitioner. It was quite plain that something was needed in the direction of consolidating those Examining Bodies, and giving the public that protection which they desired. This was, in his opinion, a very much better Bill than last year's. It was a much milder Bill. It did all that was wanted, and would not injure the Corporations much, if at all. There were, however, one or two points in the Bill to which he would refer, in order to call the right hon. Gentleman's attention to them—for instance, Clause 3, dealing with a dual qualification; and he wished to know whether it could not be made a little more elastic, and whether a medical practitioner who had already taken one qualification elsewhere—say, his surgical education in Edinburgh—might not be allowed to take another qualification from one of those Examining Bodies which formed the Conjoint Board, say his medical qualification in London? If there was no arrangement for that, it would be an injustice not only to the Corporations, but to the students and younger men. Again, he did not know if it was absolutely necessary to give, by this statute, the power to the Medical Council of sending Inspectors to examinations, seeing that that was a power which they had already, and frequently exercised. He agreed that it had been a great grievance that the Profession had had no direct representation on the Council. The Crown members were men of the highest distinction; but they had always been appointed from the leading members of the Profession, and what was wanted was that some men should be appointed from the rank and file, who knew what were the general wants and wishes. It might be well if the members appointed by the Privy Council were given up, and the direct representatives were increased from four to six or eight. The Medical Council was already too cumbrous and expensive. It talked too much and did too little. It would be well if it could be cut down to one-half or one-third.

SIR HENRY ROSCOE (Manchester, S.), in rising to support the second reading of the Bill, said he, also, felt great pleasure in giving vent to expressions of congratulation to his right hon. Friend (Sir Lyon Playfair) on the success he seemed likely to attain in securing the passing of a measure which would settle difficulties of long standing, affecting not only the Medical Profession, but also the public. In one respect it appeared to have a distinct advantage over the Bills which had been proposed before; because it did not suggest any one cut-and-dried State examination, but, by the influence of the Medical Council, endeavoured to bring all the various Medical Examining Boards into harmony, and to raise and establish the standard of knowledge. He was extremely pleased to find that the Universities were to have a fair share of representation; for it was important to bear in mind that it was teaching and not examination which created medical men, and every legitimate power and advantage ought to be given to the Universities in which these subjects were taught to the highest point of excellence of modern science. The modern medical student was a very different man from the students of previous generations, as the amount of scientific knowledge absolutely necessary now was very great indeed; and he was glad, therefore, to perceive that the Universities were to be properly represented. He hoped, however, that in Committee his right hon. Friend would consider the question of the representation of the newest University in the Kingdom—the Victoria University, with which he (Sir Henry Roscoe) had himself the honour to be connected, and in the foundation of which he had had a hand. The proposal at present in the Bill was that the Victoria University should be represented conjointly with the University of Durham. Without saying a word in disparagement of Durham, he would like to point out that the Victoria University was not only the University of Manchester, where they had one of the most flourishing medical schools in the Kingdom, but that other Colleges were connected with it, such as the University College of Liverpool, and it would probably, in a short time, have the Yorkshire College, Leeds; so that the Victoria University represented a very large population—as large, he believed, as the Metropolis. He trusted, therefore, that his right hon. Friend might see his way clear to give that most important, rising, and very active University a representative on the Council, and not tie it down to the University of Durham. He had no other remark to make, save that, while he was sure that the Bill would be received with great satisfaction, he hoped, at the same time, that the recommendations of the hon. Member for Chester (Dr. Foster) would receive due consideration, because he (Sir Henry Roscoe) felt that the Medical Profession was not so fully represented as it deserved to be; and, moreover, it was in England somewhat outweighed in regard to proportionate representation by the number of members from Scotland and Ireland.

MR. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne) said, he felt bound to express his surprise and astonishment that the previous speakers, who represented the interests of the Medical Profession in a far greater degree than himself, had not referred to what he considered to be a serious defect in the Bill, and in the law of England. It had been stated that this Bill was for the protection of the public; but he desired to point out that, at the present time, there was no protection for the public whatever in any of these Bills. It was true that the Bill permitted one general qualification for the Medical Profession, so that a medical man might not cut off a leg, or attempt to cure the measles without it; but there was no law at present to prevent the most ignorant and unqualified person from practising medicine as he pleased, or from attempting to cure the measles without any qualification whatever. He was aware of the offences created by the Medical Acts, and also of the offence in the eye of the law, if a person implied that he was a medical practitioner, when in reality he was not. At the same time, it was well known that persons might really practise surgery and medicine without being guilty of an offence, provided that they did not say they were licensed practitioners. That was a peculiarity of the law of England, and was not the case in any other civilized country. When they were so particular about the qualifications of medical men, and were dealing so admirably with the question as was done in this Bill, he hoped, if this was to be the final legislation upon the matter, the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir Lyon Playfair) would attempt to introduce some protection to the Medical Profession and to the public against those who were not only not duly qualified, but were not qualified at all.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.) said, that he had been a Member of the Royal Commission which had considered this question some years ago, and he was glad to say that he could assure hon. Members that this was a Bill which would probably have received the unanimous support of that Commission, because it entirely avoided the objections and difficulties which had caused so much difference of feeling among that Royal Commission, which had made no less than four separate Reports. The Bill was practically in full accord with the opinions of the Commission on those points on which they were in full agreement, and did not propose to increase the number of examinations, but merely to secure greater efficiency by providing that the qualification should, in all cases, be a qualification based upon examination in the three leading subjects. It was, therefore, in accord with the recommendations of the Commission; and, on account of its avoidance of the objections found by the Commission, he had no doubt that it would commend itself to the approval of the House. With regard to the suggestion of the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Manchester (Sir Henry Roscoe), whose scientific eminence increased, if possible, the weight which his opinion would otherwise have as a Member of that House, the Vice President of the Council would give full attention to his suggestion, but was unable at present to express a positive opinion. They knew how much the Victoria University had done for education in the North of England, and believed that it had a great future before it; and they would wish, if possible, to find a place for it in the arrangements to be made by this Bill; but no promise could be given at the present moment, for it must be remembered that representation given to it would be at the expense of some other institution. With regard to what had fallen from the hon. and learned Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Addison), as to unqualified men practising medicine, while fully admitting the importance of the question, he thought that it was one which did not arise in that Bill, but was one which, if necessary, ought to be treated in a special Bill. This Bill was one for the better securing of those persons who had qualifications; and he would suggest that it would be better not to load it with any new subject of controversy such as that suggested by the hon. and learned Member.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* 17th May.

INFANTS BILL.—[BILL 139.]

(*Mr. Attorney General, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. Bryce.*)

CONSIDERATION.

Bill, as amended, *considered.*

Clause 2 (On death of father, mother to be guardian alone, or jointly with others).

MR. INCE (Islington, E.), in moving an Amendment to leave out in the clause certain words, in order to insert—

> "And in such case any appointment by the father, by will or otherwise, under the Act 12th Charles II., cap. 24, or, in Ireland, under the Act of the Irish Parliament, 14th and 15th Charles II., cap. 19, or otherwise, shall be of no effect,"

said, the object of the Amendment was that the mother of a child should be in respect to guardianship in the same position as the father.

Amendment proposed,

In page 1, line 10, to leave out from the word "infant," to the end of the Clause, in order to insert the words "and in such case any appointment by the father, by will or otherwise, under the Act twelfth Charles the Second, chapter twenty-four, or in Ireland under the Act of the Irish Parliament fourteenth and fifteenth Charles the Second, chapter nineteen, or otherwise, shall be of no effect,"—(*Mr. Ince,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words 'either alone when no guardian' stand part of the Bill."

MR. GREGORY (Sussex, East Grinstead) said, he would oppose the Amendment.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.) said, that the Amendment had been put and negatived before, receiving very little support. The scheme of the Bill, as settled in that House in 1884, was that, on the death of the father, the mother should be guardian; but that the father should have power to appoint a person to act with her after his death as joint guardian. Cases might occur—and frequently did occur—in which a father died, leaving a wife surviving from whom he had not been divorced, but whom, nevertheless, he knew to be an unfit person to have the custody of the children; and it would be a great hardship if he was not to be able to secure better protection for his children by appointing someone to act conjointly with her. He knew nothing which would more embitter the last moments of a father than to feel that he was unable to do this. This Amendment was really against the interest of the mother; because it was more important for her to have the right of appointing a guardian to act conjointly with the husband after her death, subject to ratification by the Court, than to be the sole guardian, if she survived her husband. They could not, therefore, accept the Amendment.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Amendments made.

Bill to be read the third time *To-morrow.*

ULSTER CANAL AND TYRONE NAVIGATION BILL.—[BILL 141.]

(*Mr. John Morley, Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time.—(*Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

MR. BIGGAR, in moving the adjournment of the debate, said, he hoped the measure would not be proceeded with that evening, on the ground that several Irish Representatives who took an interest in the Bill, especially the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. W. O'Brien) and the hon. and learned Member for South Londonderry (Mr. T. M. Healy), were absent from the House. The hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell), who led the Party to which he (Mr. Biggar) had the honour to belong, had told the rank and file of the Party that they need not put in an appearance at Westminster till the 9th of May, which was Sunday next, the consequence being that the Irish Party now in the House was only a mere skeleton.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.), in seconding the Motion for the Adjournment, said, the Ulster Members were strongly against the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*Mr. Biggar.*)

MR. SEXTON (Sligo, S.) said, he hoped his hon. Friends would not go to a division on the Question. He was not an Ulster Member, but he was an Ulster candidate; and he found that there was a very strong feeling in favour of the principle of the Bill, and against delay. He thought his hon. Friend (Mr. Biggar) had scored quite enough already against the Bill, by preventing its passage for several years.

SIR JAMES CORRY (Armagh, Mid) said, he agreed with the hon. Member for South Sligo that there was a very strong feeling in Ulster in favour of the Bill. He therefore thought the debate ought to go on.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.) said, that, as three weeks' or a month's notice had been given that the Bill would be taken to-night, he should not be acting fairly to the House if he consented to the adjournment of the debate. In saying that he had no desire to steal a march on the Irish Members; and he had already postponed the Bill several times for their convenience. He should press for its second reading now. This Bill was a Treasury "annual." It was before the House for four or five years; but the very effective block of the hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) had hitherto prevented its passage.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 6; Noes 127: Majority 121.—(Div. List, No. 87.)

Original Question put.

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* 17th May.

BURIAL GROUNDS BILL.—[BILL 131.]

(*Mr. Osborne Morgan, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Mr. Broadhurst.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN) (Denbighshire, E.), in rising to move that the Bill be now read a second time, said, with a single exception, it was the same as the Bill he introduced last year, which never reached a second reading in consequence of the resignation of the Government. It was drawn on the lines of the Bill which was introduced in 1884 by the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydvil (Mr. Richard), the second reading of which was carried by a substantial majority, so that the principle of the Bill had been affirmed by the House of Commons. The Burials Act of 1880 had completely falsified the predictions of its opponents. It was said when the Act was under discussion that outrages would be committed in churchyards by those for whose benefit the measure was passed; but though six years had now elapsed, and thousands of burials had taken place under it, no such scandals as were predicted could be charged against Nonconformists, and the burials which had taken place under the Act had been as orderly and solemn as those of members of the Church of England. Scandals, indeed, there had been; but those who were responsible for them were clergymen of the Church of England. He freely admitted that the great majority of the clergy had accepted the inevitable with a good grace, and had obeyed the law. There had, however, been exceptions, and the spirit of the law, if not the letter, had occasionally been violated. This Bill dealt almost exclusively with the law of public cemeteries, which the Bill of 1880, as originally drawn, did not touch. With regard to those cemeteries the law was this. Unlike parish churchyards, the cemeteries had in general been purchased with the money of the ratepayers, and were vested in Burial Boards. These Boards were required to divide the ground into consecrated and unconsecrated parts, and to erect a chapel on the consecrated portion, which, as the law originally stood, was reserved exclusively for Church of England Services. It occurred to Lord Selborne, who had charge of the measure of 1880 in the House of Lords, and to himself (Mr. Osborne Morgan), that it might be well to deal with cemeteries as well as with churchyards; and accordingly clauses were inserted in it, legalizing the performance in the unconsecrated part, or in any chapel erected therein, of the Church of England Service, while the Nonconformist minister was allowed to offer up prayers in the consecrated portion of the cemetery, but only by the grave side. This somewhat one-sided settlement of the problem has not been a very happy one. The division of a cemetery into consecrated and unconsecrated parts, and sometimes into a third part exclusively appropriated to Roman Catholics, was, it must be admitted, not in accordance with the spirit of the times, and it was regarded by Nonconformists and Churchmen alike as a scandal and an outrage. It was this anomaly that the Bill sought to remove. Several Prelates of the Church of England had in their charges expressed approval of this course. The way in which the Bill proposed to effect its object was to permit consecration of the whole or any part of the cemetery, or of any number of graves, by the Bishops of the Church of England, or of any other denomination. While the Bill permitted consecration as a religious rite it deprived it of any legal operation, so that in future it would be quite unnecessary to provide separate burying places for different denominations. The clause would be retrospective in its operation as well as prospective, and in that it differed from the Bill of last year. The Bill would also get rid of the necessity of having in every cemetery a Church of England chapel. Some objection, he understood, had been raised to the Bill on behalf of Roman Catholics. All he could say was that if any Amendment not antagonistic to the principle of the Bill could be suggested to meet that objection he would give it his most careful attention. He hoped the principle of the Bill, supported as it was by the high authorities to whom he referred, would be sanctioned by the House. He moved the second reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Osborne Morgan.*)

SIR R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): Mr. Speaker, I am not going to say very much about this Bill; but I do not quite like the way it is recommended by the right hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Osborne Morgan). The right hon. and learned Gentleman says it is to be passed in order to save the Church of England, or, rather, to help the Church of England. [Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN: To protect.] But we know that the right hon. and learned Gentleman wishes to destroy the Church. ["Oh!"] I can only judge by his speeches to his constituents which I have read. It is of no use for him to say this Bill is brought in in the interest of the Church of England, when to-morrow he may be found telling his constituents he wishes the Church of England to be disestablished and disendowed. I, therefore, repudiate any argument of that kind coming from the right hon. and learned Gentleman. I am sorry that at the commencement of his observations the right hon. and learned Gentleman alluded to the isolated instances of questionable action on the part of certain Church people which had been brought before the House. I have listened Session after Session to the questions which have been asked, and I have been gratified more than once by hearing the Secretary of State for the Home Department say he has inquired into the case, and found that there is no truth in the allegation, so far as the clergyman is concerned. The right hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Osborne Morgan) would find, if he inquired from his own Colleagues, that there was no truth in the charges made. I admit that, taken as a whole, the Act has been thoroughly well accepted by the clergymen of the Church of England, and I only want to make one or two remarks about this particular Bill. I think there are certain inconsistencies in the Bill. I see that by the 1st clause there is to be no distinguishing mark between the consecrated and the unconsecrated parts of the burial ground. I do not see the object of that. If a part of the ground is to be consecrated, it is just as well everybody should know which part is consecrated and which is not. The words of the clause are—

> "The burial authority having jurisdiction over such burial ground shall not permit any division to be made, or other means to be taken, of marking the boundaries of or distinguishing the consecrated and unconsecrated parts of such ground."

I really cannot see the use of such a provision, especially when by Clause 3 it is expressly stated that part of the ground may be consecrated. If part of the ground is to be consecrated, it surely is to the advantage of everybody that the part consecrated, whether according to the rites of the Church of England or of the Church of Rome, or of any other Religious Body, should be marked out. Therefore, I hope that in Committee, if we get there, that part of the 1st clause may be struck out, or materially modified. I presume that what the right hon. and learned Gentleman really means to say is that the whole of the ground, whether consecrated or unconsecrated, is to be one and the same parochial ground, and any parishioner may be buried in any part of it. I have no doubt he will alter the words. Now, when we come to Clause 3, we find it is provided that any part of the ground may be consecrated according to the rules of the Church of England, or of any other Church or denomination, but "with the consent of the burial authority." I presume it is not meant to say by those words that the burial authority shall have the power to say that no part of the ground shall be consecrated at all. As the clause now stands, that would clearly be the effect of it. No doubt, what the right hon. and learned Gentleman means is this—that the Church of England, or the Church of Rome, or any other denomination, shall have the right to consecrate some part of the ground. Of course, the burial authority ought to have the power of regulating, in some shape or form, where the consecrated part ought to be; but I do not think the burial authority ought to have the power to withhold their consent to Church people, or to Roman Catholics, to have any part of the ground consecrated. I should like to know whether that is so or not, because it makes a considerable difference. I am sure the right hon. and learned Gentleman will see it is an important point. Now we come to the question of buildings. The law of cemeteries at the present time is that there must be a Church of England chapel. The right hon. and learned Gentleman wishes to do away with this chapel, and to provide that—

> "The burial authority may, if they think it necessary, provide a building for the performance of burial services on the occasion of funerals in any public burial ground provided by such authority."

I am no more in love with the three or four chapels in cemeteries than the right hon. and learned Gentleman is. I think it makes one very uncomfortable to see them. All that is wanted in a cemetery is a covered place, under which a certain service may take place. I think it is very much better that the religious service should take place, as in the case of Roman Catholic interments, in the Roman Catholic church, and that then all that would be required at the cemetery would be a covered place to shelter the mourners from the weather. Now it is to rest entirely with the burial authority to say whether there shall be any covered place at all in the ground. Some alteration in this respect is clearly necessary. I come to Clause 8, to which the right hon. and learned Gentleman has alluded. By the 12th section of the Burials Act of 1880, liberty to use the Burial Service of the Church of England in unconsecrated ground is given to the clergy of the Church of England—that is to say, if part of a cemetery was unconsecrated, and a clergyman of the Church of England chose to perform the Burial Service in such ground, he should not be subject to any ecclesiastical or civil penalty for so doing; but this Bill goes a great deal further than that, because by the 8th section it provides that—

> "When the burial of any person belonging to any parish comprised in a burial district for which a public burial ground has been provided either before or after the commencement of this Act takes place in such public burial ground, the incumbent of such parish shall, if required so to do in writing by the person having the conduct of the burial of such person, be under the same obligation to perform the funeral service over such person as he would be under if such person were buried in the churchyard of the parish."

Now, there you are imposing an actual duty upon the clergy of the Church of England which they are not bound to perform at the present time. You may say, if you like, that if there is a part of the burial ground consecrated according to the rites of the Church of England, and a clergyman is required to bury in that particular part, he shall be compelled to do so. To that I have no objection; but to say that a clergyman shall be compelled to bury in unconsecrated ground when it is against his conscientious convictions, although relieved of ecclesiastical penalties, is to go a great deal further than I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman wishes to go. I trust that in this respect, also, some alteration will be made. Then we come to the question of fees. I am not going to argue with the right hon. and learned Gentleman upon the question. It seems to me that, although you preserve what are called existing rights, you are, step by step and little by little, taking away the property of the clergy, who, in the long run, must lose. Now, Sir, if this Burials Bill passes, we must bury for ever this Burials Question. I trust that if the Bill passes with the alterations which, I think, are absolutely necessary, we shall not hear of the question any more; that it will not be made a stepping-stone to advance some other attack upon the Church of England. There is one matter which I am afraid the right hon. and learned Gentleman has still left unprovided for; it was provided for in the Bill which was brought forward by Lord Beaconsfield's Government many years ago, and it was most unfortunate the provision did not pass into law. By the law of England at the present time, although a person has a right to be buried, there is no legal liability upon any body or bodies of persons to provide a burial ground. That was the starting-point of the Bill which Lord Beaconsfield's Government brought forward. I do not think it is generally known, but undoubtedly it is the case, that there is no law to compel any parish or anyone to provide a burial ground, however much it is wanted. It is quite true that the law compels you to provide a Burial Board, or, rather, invites you to provide a Burial Board; but there is no law which compels that body of persons, or any Sanitary Authority, or anyone else, to provide a burial ground. When I was Secretary of State for the Home Department, one or two cases happened in which the parish churchyard had been closed, and then it was discovered that there was no power to compel anyone to provide another burial place. I know one place where there was no ground in which a person had a right to be buried, and we had a great deal of trouble in getting over the point. I am sorry that, as the right hon. and learned Gentleman has undertaken to deal with the Burial Question, he has not dealt with it in all its bearings. There remains this great blot on the law of England—that the duty is imposed upon no one of providing a burial ground. Surely such a blot ought to be removed without any delay. Perhaps I may be allowed to go back to one of the earlier clauses of the Bill in order to ask a question which I forgot to put at the commencement of my remarks. I see the Burial Authority is not to be bound to put up any buildings for the performance of the burial services if it thinks they are not necessary. I suppose that if buildings were erected, they would be intended for general use; and what I desire to ask is whether the different religious bodies may put up buildings if they choose? At the present time, although you are bound to have a Church of England chapel in a cemetery, you can have other chapels as well, and they may be charged upon the rates. What I want to know is whether private persons may be allowed to put up buildings at their own expense, because, if they are not to be so permitted, you will make a very great change in the law? Some of the cemeteries may be in out-of-the-way places, so far as some of the inhabitants are concerned; and if people are to be deprived of the privilege of putting up, at their own expense, chapels which may be necessary for their own religious services, I maintain you impose a disability upon religious bodies which I do not think the right hon. and learned Gentleman wishes to see imposed.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): After the remarks which my right hon. Friend (Sir R. Assheton Cross) has made, I do not propose to occupy very much time by any observations of mine. I may say, at the outset, that I do not intend to press the Motion of which I have given Notice, but will content myself by assisting my right hon. Friend to obtain in Committee the alterations which he has just described to the House. I quite agree with my right hon. Friend that the provision that there shall be no boundary mark between the consecrated and unconsecrated parts of the ground may lead to very serious hardship. I may illustrate what I mean by mentioning what is the practice in some cases. In Scotland, for instance, there are burial grounds which are unconsecrated, or parts of which are unconsecrated. It often happens that an Episcopalian, desiring to be buried there, acquires the right to some portion of the ground as a family grave, and before or after a burial takes place a form of consecration is gone through. Graves of this kind frequently have a boundary rail round them; and I take it this Bill would go so far as to even prohibit the consecration of a family grave, because it happens to have a boundary round it. If a Burial Board wants to have a burial ground which is partly consecrated and partly unconsecrated, I cannot see why there should be any objection to having such boundaries as would distinguish the consecrated from the unconsecrated parts. We hear from time to time about the feelings of Nonconformists on the subject, and I do not say that these feelings ought not to be respected. But Churchmen have a very strong feeling that their relations should be buried in consecrated ground, and I do not see why we should be left, as we may be left by this Bill, in a state of uncertainty as to whether the portion of ground allotted to the burial of our dead is consecrated or unconsecrated. I therefore hope that in Committee the right hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Osborne Morgan) will allow such Amendments of this clause as will give more freedom of action, especially when that freedom of action is controlled by that which is the legal authority—namely, the Burial Board. To the retrospective character of two or three of the clauses I strongly object. Clause 3, which my right hon. Friend (Sir R. Assheton Cross) has dealt with, states at the end—

> "Provided always, that the consecration of such burial ground or part thereof, whether the same has taken place before or after the commencement of this Act shall not (save as by this Act provided) confer any right, or impose any disability."

I do not know why existing burial grounds should not remain under existing Burial Acts. It may be very well to make different regulations for new burial grounds; but I am unable to see any just reason for this retrospective action with reference to existing burial grounds, especially when, as the right hon. and learned Gentleman has said, the existing Act has, on the whole, worked satisfactorily and well in respect to the present burial grounds. Again, the clause dealing with buildings is retrospective in its provisions. There are many burial grounds in which there is a chapel for Church people, another chapel for Roman Catholics, and a third chapel for such Nonconformists as require services. Each of these chapels is, I suppose, fitted and furnished to suit the services of the particular denomination to which it is assigned, and I do not see why, where these buildings already exist, you should do away with them. I hope, therefore, that we may strike out the retrospective words, especially as the right hon. and learned Gentleman has said that they were not in the original draft of the Bill. In regard to what the right hon. and learned Gentleman said as to Clause 8, it appears to me that you may be putting a very onerous and difficult duty on the clergyman of the parish, because you might be calling him away from some very important duty in connection with his own church, to perform the burial service in a cemetery where there is already a chaplain to perform. I think that these are conditions which certainly do require consideration; but, as I said, I do not propose to oppose the second reading of the Bill, although I hope that due consideration will be given to these points in Committee.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester): Previous Acts, doubtless, have done much towards conciliation in this matter; but there are felt to be some imperfections which this Bill is intended to do away with, and I would point out that, if the objections of the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir R. Assheton Cross) are accepted by the Government, they will do very much to mar the good effect of the Bill. Take, for instance, the very first point which he raises. He thinks it would be wrong to provide that there should be no division between the consecrated and unconsecrated ground. Now, Sir, I do not wish to say a single word of disrespect of the views hon. Gentlemen opposite may hold in regard to the value of being buried in consecrated ground. I can quite understand that view, if I do not agree with it; but the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson), as well as the right hon. Gentleman, will agree that the consecration is intended to soothe and gratify the feelings or sentiments of the religious communion who value it. Surely they do not wish to set up an obvious and ostentatious distinction and outward sign between the members of their communion and other Christians. Surely that cannot be a gratification to Christian feeling. They desire that their relations and themselves, when they come to die, shall be buried in consecrated ground. Well, this Bill will not prevent them being so buried. All the Bill says is, that there shall not any longer be such an outward mark between the burial places of the different Christians as now prevail in most of our cemeteries. With regard to the 3rd clause, I should certainly myself agree that it is very undesirable that any Burial Authority should have the power to prevent all consecration. But I do not read the clause in that sense. It appears to me that what is provided is, that the consent of the Burial Authority is required for the consecration of a particular portion of the ground which it is desired to consecrate. In regard to the 8th clause, against which considerable opposition has been raised also, I cannot personally see the force of the objections. I find that it merely requires the parson of the parish to perform a service in unconsecrated ground, when called upon to do so by law. Well, this is a public burial ground, and I consider that the public clergyman ought to be called upon to perform the service. But it is said he might be called upon to do so against his conscience; but I have never heard that a clergyman should have any conscience in such a case of necessity. If a clergymen accompanies an expedition to some foreign country and one of the party dies, he has no conscientious objection to reading the burial service over the deceased when interred in unconsecrated ground. Well, if the law imposes such a necessity in England, I cannot see what objection a clergyman could raise. I think that the tone of the discussion which has taken place shows how far the bigotry which formerly existed on the subject has been done away with, and what a vast improvement in public feeling has taken place. I only hope that the measure will be passed, and accepted as a finishing stroke to the great work of conciliation which has been going on for years.

MR. BERESFORD HOPE (Cambridge University): In considering the very smooth speech of my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Denbighshire (Mr. Osborne Morgan) I own I cannot clear my mind of a great many things which have been done and said during the last year or so. We all of us know that a heavier attack has been made during the autumn upon the Church of England than has been attempted for many years past. That being the case, all of those who wish well to the Church, all who wish to save the Church and shield it from any further depredation, must look a little more specially—must examine a little more closely—than they would otherwise have done at these ingenious offers for the benefit of the Church, by taking away successive privileges of the Church, which certain candid friends of the Church are always willing to offer. I own, therefore, that I could not accept my right hon. and learned Friend's gift without considering it all round. He seemed to think that sufficient reason for this legislation could be found in the fact, announced with much solemnity, that six years have elapsed since the last Act dealing with this subject was passed; and so, because this enormous period of six years has gone by, the Church is again to be harassed, and the Burial Question, which we thought we had seen the last of, and which the right hon. and learned Gentleman himself admits we have tried to make the best of, will, because six years only have elapsed, again be raised in its entirety about our ears. You may say that the question which this Bill raises is a small one; but if it is a small one, the grievance with which it deals must be small, and so it constitutes an unnecessary interference and produces an uneasy feeling which prevents the possibility of our being satisfied with anything as a final settlement. The hon. Gentleman who spoke last took exception to a wall being placed between the consecrated and the unconsecrated ground, and did not seem to understand what it meant, and he was even more disturbed at the double chapels. Well, the answer is that the arrangement which does not content him is a record of the facts of the case, without necessarily bringing in feelings in any way. It shows which is the consecrated and which is the unconsecrated ground. With regard to the chapels in cemeteries, as well as elsewhere, they are practical buildings for performing practical rites. The rites connected with burial in the Church of England are one thing, and the rites of burial out of the Church of England are another, and that is the reason why it is expedient that there should be different buildings differently arranged for each. I am not going to enlarge on that fact, nor to defend the frame of mind which sees value in it; but I am simply dealing with the statement as conclusive evidence that the existence of two chapels in no way indicates religious hatred. No doubt, this Bill will be accepted by the House; but I say, and I say it very strongly, that it is an altogether unnecessary interference. It does no good that I can see, and it is calculated to raise an unpleasant feeling on the part of those who have most loyally, and at the cost of their own feelings, made the best of the Act of 1880. That being so, I must protest against its introduction.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I was glad to hear from the right hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Osborne Morgan) that he would be glad to consider any proposal or Amendment which may be brought forward in the Roman Catholic interest at the Committee stage, and it is on that understanding that we will not oppose its second reading. It is clear, that if the Bill were to pass in its present form, the Catholics of England

and Scotland would suffer, perhaps, in a way which the right hon. and learned Gentleman would not appreciate, but still in a way which we should consider very injurious. I hope, therefore, that Amendments will be introduced in Committee.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* 24th May.

RETURNING OFFICERS' CHARGES (SCOTLAND) BILL.—[BILL 188.]

(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I do not rise to oppose the second reading of the Bill. On the contrary, I think that I am expressing the feelings of all the Scotch Members, when I say that we are very much indebted to the right hon. and learned Gentleman for introducing a measure of this kind. I merely wish to call attention to the charges in the Schedule of the Bill, which are altogether too high, and will require to be very much modified in Committee. My election agent informs me that the rates in the Schedule of this Bill will very largely increase the expenses, and to a county Member, even an hon. Member informs me that in his case if only two candidates contest the seat, the scheduled rates will nearly double the Returning Officer's expenses. Moreover, I would point out that the Returning Officer in Scotland is an official of the Crown, and, as such, is very well paid, and I do not see why the candidate should be called upon to pay him for discharging a public duty. The Returning Officer is the Sheriff of the county; but the Sheriff of the county usually resides in Edinburgh, and may either perform the duty himself, or leave it to a substitute. Now, according to the Bill, the candidates are expected to pay for the Returning Officer making the journey from Edinburgh to the constituency and back again, when he thinks proper. At this moment, however, I will not enter into details. I am not going to oppose the second reading of the Bill; I only rise to say that we hope to cut down and consolidate the expenses in Committee. I understand that the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) does not wish to increase the expenses of elections, and I can assure him that in that he will be very warmly supported by Members from Scotland. On the other hand, I can assure him that unless something is done to cut down the expenses as they appear in the Schedule, it will be the duty of the Scotch Members to oppose the Bill altogether.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I am afraid the hon. Member for Forfarshire is under some slight misapprehension, because it will be noticed that the charges in the Schedule are not charges authorized to be made unless they are absolutely and necessarily incurred. They are the maximum charges to be made by the Returning Officer; but they are in no case to exceed the sums actually necessary to be paid or payable. We have a very great difficulty in Scotland in regard to a hard-and-fast line, because the conditions vary, and the distances vary so enormously; but, notwithstanding that, the charges in the Schedule are not higher than those in England—even the maximum. I shall be very glad to have the advantage of the assistance of Scottish Members in cutting down the charges still farther. One great difficulty is in regard to taxing; but in this measure, I think, we have introduced something where the corresponding English measure is defective, and I think it will furnish us with a very effective method of taxation. It provides that the power of taxing shall be with the Election Judges—in Scotland the Central Body—and that they shall submit the charges to the Court of Quarter Session, who will require strict evidence of the necessity of every charge made. The result will be that, most probably, a uniform and greatly diminished and very moderate scale will be established. Yes, I say, I shall be only too glad to have the assistance of any hon. Friends from Scotland in this matter. With regard to what has been said about the Sheriff, it is quite true that he is a "public officer," and, being so, it is not intended he should receive payment for his own services. On looking at the Bill, the payment will be found to be a necessary outlay and disbursement. On all matters of detail I shall be very glad to meet my hon. Friends where it is possible.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

MOTION.

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Acland, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade, under "The General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861," relating to Ballyshannon, Buckie, Coldingham, Cullen, Dovercourt, Dunbar, Loch Ranza, Lynmouth, Mevagissey, Newlyn, Penarth, Saint Ives, Shanklin, and Wexford, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Charles Acland and Mr. Mundella.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 201.]

House adjourned at a quarter before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 4th *May*, 1886.

QUESTIONS.

CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS—CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES—DECISIONS OF THE JUDGES.

MR. H. G. REID (Aston Manor) asked Mr. Attorney General, If his attention has been called to the decisions in election petitions under the Corrupt Practices Act, and to the unseating of Members in constituencies where it was proved the provisions and spirit of the Act had been impressed on the committees by the candidates, and carried out, with trifling exceptions over which they had no direct control, and which did not materially affect the elections, specially:—Barrow in Furness, where the sitting Member was unseated and burdened with heavy expenses because refreshments were provided, according to evidence, in very moderate quantities, for actual workers on the day of the election, as was done in the majority of constituencies, and held to be permissible by the legal authorities who prepared editions of the Act for the guidance of candidates; also Ipswich and Norwich, where the elections were voided because small amounts had been paid or promised by irresponsible members of large committees without the cognizance and contrary to the instructions of the candidates and their duly appointed agents; also the Stepney Division of the Tower Hamlets, in which, although the successful candidate retained his seat, he was mulcted in heavy expenses; and, whether it is the intention of the Government to adopt any measure for amending or explaining the Act so as to prevent such uncertainty in the future, and the infliction upon the innocent of heavy penalties?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir CHARLES RUSSELL) (Hackney, S.), in reply, said, that the cases which were mentioned did not stand precisely in the same position. With regard to Barrow-in-Furness, the Member was unseated there for an illegal practice in the form of an illegal payment; and, under the 22nd and 23rd sections of the Corrupt Practices Act of 1883, the Election Judges might, if they had seen fit in the circumstances of the case, have held that it was no sufficient ground for unseating the Member. In the cases of Ipswich and Norwich, the acts there were corrupt practices, but of a very small kind unquestionably. They were not cases that came under the Corrupt Practices Act of 1883; they would have been grounds for unseating a Member under the prior law. When the Corrupt Practices Bill was before the House, his hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) moved a clause which would have had the effect of enabling Judges to deal with small and trivial acts of corruption, for which the candidate was not morally responsible, in the same way as under the 22nd and 23rd sections of the Act of 1883. The Amendment of his hon. Friend upon a division was negatived; and, under these circumstances, he could not say that the time had arrived for considering any fresh change in the law with regard to the matter. In ordinary litigation costs followed the event, unless the Judge who tried the case for good reasons saw right to order otherwise. That was substantially the law with regard to Election Petitions—namely, that the costs were in the discretion of the Judges, and the

Government did not see that any better rule could be made applicable to that kind of cases.

Mr. H. G. REID gave Notice that he would on an early day call attention to the decisions under the Corrupt Practices Act, and move a Resolution.

LAND PURCHASE (IRELAND) ACT, 1885 —STATISTICS OF PURCHASES.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he can state the total rent of the farms, the purchase of which for £617,883 has been sanctioned under the provisions of the Land Purchase Act of 1885, and the average number of years purchase on the gross rent; and, if, in that respect, he can classify the large and small farms, showing the number of years purchase in each class?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, that the total rental of the farms in Ireland, the purchase of which had been sanctioned under the provisions of the Land Purchase Act of 1885, was £35,714 14*s*. 9*d*. a-year. The amount sanctioned for the purchase was £617,833. Of this sum £164,700 was for the purchase of farms paying a rent of £100 a-year and upwards, representing a total rental of £9,860 4*s*. 11*d*.; and £453,133 was for the purchase of farms less than £100 a-year, representing a total rental of £25,853 19*s*. 10*d*. The average number of years' purchase of the gross rent in respect of each class of holdings was about 18. It should be explained that in some instances the advances sanctioned were less than the total purchase-moneys—in other words, that part of the purchase-money was in these cases found by the intending purchasers themselves.

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)— LAW OF REMOVAL—CASE OF MARY ANN ASSITER, MAIDSTONE.

Mr. ISAACS (Newington, Walworth) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether his attention has been called to the judgment given on the 14th April last in the High Court of Justice, Queen's Bench Division, in the matter of an appeal by the Guardians of the Maidstone Union against an order of removal obtained by the Guardians of the Holborn Union for the removal of Mary Ann Assiter, a widow, to the parish of Maidstone, in the Maidstone Union, the result of such judgment being that a widow, although her husband had paid rates and taxes in any particular parish, is not allowed to have the advantage of a settlement so obtained, but is removable to the place of her birth in any part of Great Britain or Ireland unless she has acquired a settlement as a widow, or before marriage; and, whether it is the intention of the Local Government Board to introduce a measure to remedy the present state of the Law as regards the removal of the poor as at present defined?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Stansfeld) (Halifax): I have, as yet, only seen a very brief note of the judgment in the case referred to. When the decision is reported, the question will receive the consideration of the Board.

VACCINATION LAWS—REPEATED PROSECUTIONS—CASE OF CHARLES HAYWARD, ASHFORD, KENT.

Mr. ROBINSON (Gloucester) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is true that Charles Hayward, mechanic, of Ashford, Kent, has been summoned before the magistrates of that town fourteen times within twelve months, and fined seven times by them for neglect to vaccinate one and the same child; whether he will remit the seventh penalty of 20*s*. and 12*s*. costs imposed on the 13th of April; and, whether he will lay upon the Table of this House a letter, dated the 18th of March last, addressed to the Lord Chancellor by Mr. Baker, who was counsel in the case on the thirteenth summons, calling attention to the illegality of the proceedings?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.): In reply to my hon. Friend, I have to say that this question has been for some time before the Local Government Board, which Department, and not the Home Office, it really concerns. As far as any remission of penalty is concerned, I see no reason to recommend the indulgence of the Crown in favour of any person who persistently refuses to comply with the law. I will ask the Lord Chancellor whether he has any objection to lay the letter referred to upon the Table; but I should greatly doubt whether his doing so would be in accordance with custom.

Mr. ROBINSON asked, did the right hon. Gentleman imply censure upon the Circular issued by the Local Government Board to the Guardians at Evesham?

Mr. CHILDERS said, he implied no censure upon anybody or anything. The question was one for the Local Government Board.

PEACE PRESERVATION (IRELAND) ACT.

Mr. LEWIS (Londonderry) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Government intend to ask the House to renew the Arms Act (Ireland) which expires on the 1st June next; and, whether such Bill will be introduced so as to give a prospect of its being passed into Law before the 1st June? He wished to add, if the House, would allow him to do so, whether, supposing the Government renew the Act, will it be a new Act or merely a continuance of the old Act, and also for what time it will run?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I have a Notice on the Paper to-day, for leave to bring in a Bill this evening for a further renewal, for a limited period, of the Peace Preservation Act of 1881. On the Motion that "Leave be given," I should not propose to make a speech. The Bill is a very short one, and should I obtain leave, I propose, of course, with the consent of hon. Gentlemen from Ireland both above and below the Gangway, to put down the second reading of the Bill so early as Thursday. The Bill is one of only two clauses, and I think it should become law before the 1st of June.

Subsequently,

Mr. SEXTON (Sligo, S.) asked, whether, in the first instance, there was a reason why no statement would be made as to why the Bill was proposed to be introduced; and, secondly, considering the fact that a number of Irish Members were absent, the Chief Secretary would consent to take the second reading not earlier than Monday next?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: I should have preferred to make no statement until the second reading. If hon. Gentlemen above and below the Gangway think it too early if I put down the second reading on Thursday, I will postpone it to Monday.

GREECE AND THE POWERS.

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I gave Notice yesterday to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that I intended to-day to ask the Government, whether they were able to make any statement to the House as to the relations between the Great Powers and Greece, and when Papers on the subject would be presented?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): In answer to the Question of the right hon. Baronet, I have to say, as the right hon. Gentleman and the House is well aware, a Collective Note, on the part of the Powers, was addressed to Greece, and a time was fixed within which an answer would be received, or other consequences would follow. That time expired at 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon; and, since then, we have received no definite news whatever. Under the circumstances, the House will see that it is obvious the time has not arrived for me to make any further reply, though, probably, I may be able to do so before any length of time has elapsed. But this I may say, that the answer that was sent by the Government of Greece to the Collective Note, and which has been before each of the Powers, is, in the opinion of all of them, not an adequate, or a satisfactory one. As to Papers, it is difficult to say, just now, when it will be most convenient to present them; but I may say that in a very short time indeed, Papers will be presented, and in two or three days I shall be able to give a more definite answer.

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: Perhaps I will repeat the Question on Thursday.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I will do what I can.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Prime Minister, Whether the Crofters' Bill would be the first Order on Thursday?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I believe the announcement has just been made that it was proposed to take the Railway Rates Bill first on Thursday.

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH said, that for reasons he had mentioned to the Lord Advocate he begged to ask him to be good enough to postpone Report of the Vote for Sheriffs' expenses till Thursday.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.), in reply, said, that he understood that the particular Vote referred to might be postponed till Thursday without inconvenience.

MOTIONS.

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TOBACCO.

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll), in rising to call attention to the adulteration of Tobacco, and the mode in which duty is now levied upon it, and to move—

> "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the working and effect of the present system of levying Duty upon Tobacco; to consider, having due regard to Revenue requirements, whether any change should be introduced, and to inquire and report upon the excessive use of moisture contained in manufactured Tobacco,"

said, that having entered fully into the subject as regarded the differential duties imposed upon this article on the 15th of May, 1884, he did not propose, on the present occasion, to do more than show a *primâ facie* case for the appointment of a Select Committee, which, if the Government granted, would inquire into all the details with regard to adulteration and duty. On the former occasion, the 15th of May, 1884, to which he had referred, a Member of the late Parliament, who was also a tobacco manufacturer (Mr. Wills), told him that if he carried his Motion, he would ruin every tobacco manufacturer in England. He had no wish to do that; but he believed there were grievances and anomalies connected with the present system which ought to be removed, and he could assure the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he had no desire to make a raid upon the Revenue. He recognized that, in existing circumstances, a large revenue from tobacco was a necessary evil. All he wished for was to see whether it was possible, by a more equitable system of levying the duties, to get a better quality of the article for the majority of the consumers without exposing the Revenue to any loss. By law all adulteration, except with water, was prohibited; but any quantity of water was allowed to be added, and the result was, that the tobacco which was sold to the poorer classes was about half water. A few samples of tobacco, 22 in number, had been analyzed for him to show what proportions of water they contained. In No. 1 sample, a bird's eye tobacco, at 5*s.* a-pound, the analyist found from 5 to 8 per cent of water; in tobacco No. 2, at 4*s.* 8*d.*, from 10 to 14 per cent; in tobacco No. 3, at 3*s.* 10*d.*, from 21 to 26 per cent; in tobacco No. 4, at 3*s.* 4*d.*, from 40 to 45 per cent; in tobacco No. 5, at 3*s.* 2*d.*, from 45 to 50 per cent; while tobacco No. 6, the lowest priced article, sold at 3*s.* 1*d.* a-pound, contained from 55 to 60 per cent of water. The three lowest qualities in his list represented three-fifths of the whole of the tobacco consumed in this country, and they were almost exclusively used by the working classes. In these the lowest percentage of water was 44, and the highest 53. The ordinary tobacco consumed by the working classes was sold across the counter at 3*d.* an ounce, which was 4*s.* a-pound; but the working man got only 50 per cent of tobacco for his money, and, consequently, he really paid 8*s.* a-pound for the tobacco he consumed; while the richer classes paid 5*s.* and 6*s.* a-pound and got 92 per cent of pure tobacco. He thought that was a great and strong proof that the working classes had a considerable grievance in the matter, and that a serious injustice was done them respecting it. They were entitled, as far as the necessities of the Revenue would permit, to get the best article they could for their money; and yet they paid a higher price than the rich did for the very finest tobacco. ["Oh, oh!"] He said that the working classes paid 25 per cent more for their tobacco than probably most Members of the House did for the tobacco they consumed. The total quantity of pure tobacco imported into this country in 1883 was 49,000,000 lbs.; but the total amount of manufactured tobacco sold over the counter was 84,000,000 lbs., showing that the addition made by water was 35,000,000 lbs. At 3*s.* 6*d.* a-pound that would represent a revenue of £6,000,000 sterling. In his opinion, the duty on tobacco ought not to be charged simply by weight. It should be an *ad valorem* duty. A former Chancellor of the Exchequer said, some time ago, that this country had for ever given up *ad valorem* duties; but that was hardly so, as they were still imposed on wines. It was not fair or equitable that a penny or a twopenny cigar should pay the same duty as one sold at 1*s.* or 1*s.* 8*d.* At the same time, he did not advocate a minute system of *ad valorem* duties, which would give great trouble. In the Wine Duties there were great leaps and wide intervals, and it might be so in the case of tobacco. The rich man's cigar ought to be more heavily taxed than that of the poor man. He objected also to the protective duty on foreign manufactured tobacco. If we took 100 lbs. of tobacco manufactured in this country, it would contain 50 lbs. of duty paid leaf; and the duty payable upon that was £8 15*s.* Upon 100 lbs. of imported tobacco with the moisture in it, not only was the moisture charged with duty, which was not the case with the article manufactured at home, but 1*s.* 4*d.* per pound more duty was imposed, and the result was that 100 lbs. of manufactured tobacco imported into the United Kingdom would pay, instead of £8 15*s.*, £24 3*s.* of duty. The result was protection to the home manufacturer to the extent of £15 8*s.* 4*d.* upon every 100 lbs. of tobacco, at the cost of the consumer, which meant that the manufacturers were thus enabled to fatten on the masses of the people. If this country was to have Protection, let them say so; but let them not pretend that they had Free Trade, when they had not. Let that be clearly understood. As he had before observed, an eminent tobacco manufacturer said to him in the House when he brought this subject forward—" If you succeed in your Motion, you will ruin every tobacco manufacturer in the United Kingdom." He (Mr. Macfarlane) understood that assurance to mean that the tobacco trade was fattening on the bad Customs' laws that existed. At the same time, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer said that his (Mr. Macfarlane's) figures were accurate, and the hon. Member referred to said that he agreed with all that had fallen from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If the analyses he had submitted were correct, surely there was a fair case for inquiry, and, when it was established, for prohibition. Not only did the water put into the tobacco defraud the poor man, but the effect of the excessive wetting it received was to spoil the article. In order to keep up the weight the retail traders were obliged to continue the process of saturation, and the tobacco was soaked until it was like sponge when it was put into the pipe. It was almost impossible for one honest manufacturer to live. The only way to obtain honesty was to make it compulsory on all. There was, at all events, a case for inquiry as to whether we could not prevent this gross adulteration to the detriment of the poor, and make the duties paid by the rich and the poor more equitable without doing injury to the Revenue. If we adopted the American system, as he would suggest we might, we should prebably receive a larger revenue and secure the supply of a better quality of tobacco to the people. He challenged contradiction on the facts he had stated, and maintained that the state of things at present existing was a scandal, and it was in order to end it that he now made the Motion of which he had given Notice.

MR. RYLANDS (Burnley), in seconding the Motion, said, that he did so on the ground that his hon. Friend the Member for Argyll (Mr. Macfarlane) had made out a good *primâ facie* case which would justify inquiry. There could be no doubt that there was a large amount of water in manufactured tobacco, which had unfairly to be paid for by those who consumed it. It would be of great advantage if the duty could be imposed on, say, a pound weight of the pure material, instead of on about three-fourths as at present. The Tobacco Duty also ought to be altered in such a way as to impose an additional duty on the expensive tobacco used by the luxurious smoker, as against that placed upon the inferior article used by the working and humbler portions of the population. If there was any ground for the contention that tobacco manufacturers enjoyed the benefits of protection, he hoped steps would be taken to abolish such a system, because he did not see why they should enjoy a privilege of this kind over other traders of the country. On the case submitted by the hon. Member he thought there was ground for inquiry. The matter ought to be thoroughly thrashed out before a Committee of this House, and he therefore hoped a Committee of Inquiry would be granted.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the working and effect of the present system of levying Duty upon Tobacco; to consider, having due regard to Revenue requirements, whether any change should be introduced, and to inquire and report upon the excessive use of moisture contained in manufactured Tobacco."—(*Mr. Macfarlane.*)

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.) said, he thought the House would agree with him that when they had a very large revenue of between £8,000,000 and £9,000,000 arising from a particular article the collection and administration of which had not only been carefully considered by the competent servants of the Crown, but also by successive Chancellors of the Exchequer, belonging to both political Parties, from 1844, when the question was first raised, down to 1863 when the present system was practically adopted—when they had a fiscal system, which was working without friction—was producing that very large revenue—was inflicting no injury on any class of the community, and was working satisfactorily as between the manufacturers, the importers, and the Treasury, it was a very undesirable thing to disturb fiscal arrangements of that sort, even by the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry. The hon. Member who introduced the subject had made some strong assertions in the course of his speech; but he had made out no great or urgent case for inquiry. There was another question of a practical character to be considered. The present Parliament had appointed more Select Committees than any previous Parliament had ever appointed in such a short space of time. Even if the case were 10 times stronger than it was, he thought the House would not be well advised, if it were to agree to an increase in the number of its Committees. The case of the hon. Member was threefold; he had based his case on adulteration, protection, and the unsatisfactory mode of levying the duty upon tobacco. The hon. Member stated that there was a large amount of water used in the manufacture of tobacco. He (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) was not a tobacco manufacturer himself nor a tobacco consumer, and, therefore, his testimony was perhaps tainted with a little ignorance. He was informed, however, that there was no article of consumption in this country at the present time which was more free from adulteration than tobacco. The hon. Member, as he (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) had said, complained of the quantity of water that was to be found in that article; but he could assure the hon. Gentleman that it was practically impossible to manufacture tobacco in a dry condition. The opinion of the authorities was that there was an average amount of moisture in the tobacco of something like 35 per cent. But, taking the premisses of the hon. Member, he would admit, for the sake of argument, that there was too much water used. Who was to draw the line between the use of sufficient moisture and too much? What Government authority was to step in and say to the manufacturer, this article should contain only so much moisture? There were 600 tobacco manufacturers in England, each of whom would require to be placed under Government supervision. For that purpose an army of Excise officers would be needed; and not only would they have to superintend the manufacturer of tobacco, but they would have to watch the dealers, who numbered quite 300,000 persons. This large trading interest would resent an interference of this description, and would say that they knew how to carry on their trade, being, as they were, subject to the general law with regard to adulteration. The Inland Revenue Authorities also said that, judging from past experience, a restriction of the kind proposed with regard to the amount of water could not be carried out by them, and would result in failure. The relations between vendor and purchaser and manufacturer and consumer were that of the ordinary competition of trade; and for the Government to say that there should be a certain amount of water in the tobacco would be to go outside the proper function of a Government.

MR. MACFARLANE: I do not propose that the Government should interfere with the quantity of water, but that they should charge duty on the water.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER said, the case of the hon. Member was that there was an amount of adulteration in tobacco which called for the appointment of a Select Committee. His contention, on the other hand, was that no such case of adulteration had been made out; and the question of excess or not of water was not one for legislation, but should be dealt with in another manner. As to protection, he would tell the House what the duties on tobacco were. The duty on unmanufactured tobacco was either 3*s.* 6*d.*, or, if it contained less than 10 per cent of moisture, 3*s.* 10*d.*; the duty on cigars, &c., 5*s.* 6*d.*; and other tobacco, 4*s.* 10*d.* The only arbitrary figure was the amount of duty levied on the raw material. In 1863, when the present Prime Minister was Chancellor of the Exchequer, that matter was most carefully considered; and the judgment arrived at was that, looking to all the circumstances of the case, when the English manufacturer was charged a duty on the raw material of 3*s.* 2*d.*, and the imported article was charged 3*s.* 10*d.*, the duties were practically the same; there was no protection whatever for the home manufacturer. The very highest and most competent skill had been directed to adjusting the duties, so as to put the manufactured article on the same level as the unmanufactured, and that they should both contribute as nearly as possible the same amount to the Revenue. Reference had been made to Indian manufactured tobacco coming into this country; but a former Member for Coventry (the late Mr. Wills), who was especially conversant with the matter, had stated, in the debate on that subject in 1884, that under no circumstances, short of a Preferential Duty, could Indian tobacco have any chance of obtaining a ready sale in this country, on account of its inferior quality. Another question that had been raised related to the quality of the duty levied on various classes of tobacco. It had been stated that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in 1884, said they had abandoned the principle of *ad valorem* duties, and the case of the Wine Duties had been mentioned as being inconsistent with that assertion. But they levied no *ad valorem* duties on wine, the duty was levied on the strength, and not on the price of wine. On the first impression he should be inclined to agree that they should, if possible, impose a higher duty on the expensive article than on the inferior one; but there were a good many questions to be considered. If they put a higher duty than 5*s.* 6*d.*, which was the present charge, on cigars, the effect of that might be to decrease the number of persons who smoked the better class of cigars, and to increase the number who consumed the inferior, and so to decrease the revenue. On that point, however, he expressed no opinion; but he thought it was one worthy of consideration, and would promise that it would receive attention from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. That, however, was not a matter for a Select Committee, but rather for the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Revenue Authorities; and he did not think that the hon. Member had made out any case of injustice, inequality, or unfairness in the mode of levying them that would justify the House in disregarding the opinion of those who, under successive Governments, had been concerned in the collection of those duties. Under all the circumstances, therefore, he did not think that in the month of May, with the number of Committees already appointed, a case had been made out for granting a Committee.

Question put, and *negatived.*

OPIUM.—RESOLUTION.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I rise, Sir, for the purpose of calling attention to the cultivation of the poppy in India, and the manufacture and trade in opium by the Government of India; and of moving—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, it is expedient that the Indian Government should take measures to terminate gradually its direct connection with the cultivation of the poppy, and the manufacture of and trade in opium, and that it should use the powers that it possesses to prohibit in British India the cultivation of the poppy, except to supply the legitimate demand of opium for medical purposes."

I have been very anxious to bring before Parliament a question in reference to which I have laboured for some years past, and as to which I think I may venture to say that those who have cooperated with me have not altogether laboured in vain. In dealing with the Opium Question to-night, I desire to lay down two propositions which I intend to try to prove. The first is, that cultivating the poppy and dealing in this trade by the Indian Government is contrary to those moral rules which ought to govern civilized nations—that it is contrary to the laws which ought to influence the feelings of mankind, one towards the other; and that upon economical grounds it is contrary to the financial interests of the great country over which Providence has placed us. On former occasions I have brought before the House the question of the great quantity of opium which we were sending to China, and I have endeavoured to show what the effect of the trade was upon the people of that country, and how demoralizing it was to them. But the ground upon which I endeavoured to argue was, that we had no right whatever to force that opium into China against the wishes of the Chinese people, and that we were bound to treat China as we should treat Germany or France or any other independent Power on a footing of equality with ourselves. Her Majesty's Government have, to some degree, accepted the view which I and those who have supported me entertained, because while many of us have been compelled to find fault with the manner in which various Governments have previously refused to recognize the Chefoo Convention, that Convention has now, after having been in abeyance from 1876 until 1885, at last been ratified, and a Treaty has been made with the Chinese for five years. With that Treaty the Chinese Government are, I believe, content. China has, I think, taken the Treaty as the best she could get, rather than all she deserves to have. The Treaty itself was delayed from the 12th of March, 1883, to the 18th of July, 1885, and it was only last year that the English Government consented to ratify it. The Chefoo Convention had in the meantime been kept in suspense since 1876. I now ask the House to say whether we are justified in the course we have followed in the cultivation of the poppy, and the manufacture of Indian opium? The Indian opium revenue is derived from two sources. As is well known, the main source of the Indian Revenue is the cultivation of the poppy, principally in the Province of Bengal, by means of money granted from time to time to the cultivators, in a manner which has been well described by Sir Cecil Beadon in evidence given to this House before the East India Committee. Sir Cecil Beadon was asked—

> "If there is any regulation by which the Government limit the extension of land cultivated, or do they always accede to every request?"

His reply was—

> "It is limited according to the financial needs of the Government; it is limited entirely upon Imperial considerations."

The second source of Revenue is the pass duty from Malwa. I do not attack the Malwa duty; but it is the opium revenue from Bengal which I propose to attack to-night. I have no desire to attack in any way the revenue derived from opium produced in the Native States of India, which passes through India on its way to China. Upon such opium a very considerable import duty is levied, and according to a Return presented to Parliament by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), when at the India Office, the Indian Government received a net duty, from that source, on an average of 10 years ending 1880-1, of £2,694,000. It is quite plain that whenever more money is wanted in India—whenever the Indian Revenue fails—stress is put on the Department charged with the cultivation of the poppy; and just in proportion as they want money, so they go on adding to the misery of mankind. In a Minute written by the hon. Baronet now sitting opposite—the Member for the Evesham Division of Worcestershire (Sir Richard Temple)—on the 27th of April, 1869, the hon. Gentleman said—

> "I am clear for extending the cultivation, and for insuring a plentiful supply. If we do not do this, the Chinese will do it for themselves. They had better have our good opium than their own indifferent opium. There is really no moral objection to our conduct in this respect."

If somebody is to be poisoned, we had better do it. If somebody is to be robbed, I suppose we had better do it. That is the entire argument of the hon. Baronet's Minute, and the same argument has been used by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir George Campbell). The hon. Member has admitted that the drug does a great deal of harm; but he argues that if the Chinese are to be poisoned in this way, it is better that we should do it than let anybody else profit by the operation. I do not understand that this forms part of the moral government of a people for whom we are trying to do the best we can. But I think, Sir, that the strongest part of my case as against the Indian Government is the case of Burmah. In regard to that case, I hold in my hand the Report of Mr. C. U. Aitchison, now Sir Charles Aitchison, late Chief Commissioner of British Burmah. When we first took possession of British Burmah no opium was consumed in that country. In the interests of the Indian Government we brought opium into Burmah, and we have had to do our very best to turn it out again, which, however, we have not yet succeeded in doing. We have, however, succeeded in this—in demoralizing the people of Burmah in a way which the Report I am about to quote shows to have been of the most serious character. Sir Charles Aitchison says—

> "The Papers now submitted for consideration present a painful picture of the demoralization, misery, and ruin produced among the Burmese by opium smoking. Responsible officers in all divisions and districts of the Province and Natives everywhere bear testimony to it. To facilitate examination of the evidence on this point, I have thrown some extracts from the Reports into an Appendix to this Memorandum. These show that, among the Burmans, the habitual use of the drug saps the physical and mental energies, destroys the nerves, emaciates the body, predisposes to disease, induces indolent and filthy habits of life, destroys self-respect, is one of the most fertile sources of misery, destitution, and crime, fills the gaols with men of relaxed frame predisposed to dysentry and cholera, prevents the due extension of cultivation and the devolopment of the land revenue, checks the natural growth of the population, and enfeebles the constitution of succeeding generations."

If hon. Members will turn to the Appendix to the Report they will find language used there almost stronger than the Report itself. Colonel H. Browne, Commissioner of the Pegu Division, writing on the 27th of May, 1879, says—

> "By adopting some effective measures for curtailing the consumption of opium we should, at any rate, have the satisfaction of saving many thousands of the rising generation of Burmans from leading lives which are not only useless, but positively injurious to themselves, their families, and the State, and should convert them into respectable and wealth-producing subjects."

Then I have here a long Memorial from the upper classes of Burmah protesting against the use and consumption of opium in that Province, and speaking of it as the greatest possible curse. So recently as 1883-4, Mr. Hodgkinson, Commissioner of the Irrawaddy District, in his Excise Report, said—

> "A large revenue is secured to the Government by the present system, but it is secured by sapping the very heart's blood of the people, the better classes of whom most bitterly reproach us, and in my opinion very justly, for our apathy and misgovernment in this matter. No material improvement can be looked for until opium shops are licensed for sale in the premises only, and the possession of opium outside the shops in any quantity, however small, is rendered penal."

Mr. Commissioner Copleston writes in his Report for 1884-5—

> "The real question seems to be, first, whether it is to be accepted as an admitted fact, and there can be no doubt that a vast majority of officers do consider it to be so, that opium eating and smoking are most injurious to the well-being both of individuals and of society in British Burmah; and, secondly, whether the evil is to be stopped at all hazards, and regardless of the loss of revenue which must be incurred?"

The Indian Government has attempted, and I think in a praiseworthy manner, to put down the opium trade in British Burmah. It has lessened the number of opium shops by at least two-thirds; but the revenue, owing to the habits of the people, has been kept up, although the price has been raised 30 per cent. The population still go on using the drug; and the whole character of the Report I have read is to show that in British Burmah the opium shops have become a more important matter than ever. Now that we have practically taken Upper Burmah into our hands, with its long frontier upon one of the most extensive opium producing districts of China, the question will arise—"What are you going to do in Upper Burmah? Are you going to allow opium to go through Upper Burmah to India? Are you going to send Indian opium through Burmah to China, or are you going to prohibit the trade altogether?" Our policy hitherto has been that if we do not do it somebody else will. It is alleged that some of us take an exaggerated view of the damage done by the use of the drug; and I am afraid that the noble Lord opposite (Lord Randolph Churchill) and others interested in the government of India, have already to some extent sanctioned that view of the case. Well, Sir, if the drug is a harmless drug, if it is not damaging to mankind and the cause of human misery, I have no case whatever. If it is not a drug which is pernicious, I have no right to object to the use of it. I am told that the effects of opium smoking in India or China are no worse than those of spirit drinking in this country; but in England it is well known that we have long been trying to put that spirit drinking down. There are many of us who have laboured hard in the cause of temperance, and I think that our labours in this country have not altogether been in vain. But every man whose opinion is worth having tells us that the effects of opium smoking in India and China are far worse than those of the consumption of spirits in England.

General Sir **GEORGE BALFOUR** (Kincardine): I never saw it.

Sir **JOSEPH PEASE**: My hon. and gallant Friend beside me says that he never saw it; but I can assure him that many of my friends who have been in China make a very different statement. What do the Government of Bombay say about it? The Government of Bombay ordered the following letter to be addressed to the Government of India:—

> "With reference to the Correspondence ending with Mr. Under Secretary Sinkinson's letter, No. 3990, dated 11th December, 1880, I am directed to forward the accompanying Reports of the Commissioner in Scinde and the Commissioner of Customs, Opium, and Akbari, on the question of the expediency of permitting the cultivation of the poppy in Scinde. I am at the same time to state that this Government consider there are very strong objections to the introduction of an industry so demoralizing in its tendency as opium cultivation and manufacture into a Province where at present it is unknown, and, so far as His Excellency in Council is aware, not asked for by the people. If opium cultivation were allowed in Scinde, it could not with consistency be prohibited in the rest of the Presidency. It has already been tried in Gujarat, and the result was widespread corruption and demoralization. At present the consumption of opium in this Presidency is very limited; but if the cultivation of opium and manufacture of opium were permitted every village might have its opium shop, and every cultivator might contract the habit of eating a drug which is said to degrade and demoralize those who become addicted to it. On the ground of public morality, therefore, His Excellency the Governor in Council would strongly deprecate the grant of permission to cultivate the poppy in Scinde or in any other part of this Presidency."

That, Sir, is not a document issued by the Anti-Opium Society, but an authentic document from the Government of Bombay, sent to the Government of India, asking them not to allow the cultivation of this drug in the Province of Scinde. I hardly care to enter upon the same ground which I have travelled over before—[*Ironical cheers.*]—but I think it is necessary to do so, to some extent, in consequence of the ironical cheers which have proceeded from my hon. and gallant Friend now sitting beside me (Sir George Balfour). Let me give the case of California. Opium introduced into California from China was introduced by the Chinese; but the trade had been established then, to a great extent, by the exertions of English speaking merchants in China. Dr. Kane, in his work upon *Opium Smoking in America and China*, says—

> "The first white man who smoked opium in America is said to have been a sporting character, named Clendenyn. This was in California in 1868. The second, induced to try it by the first, smoked in 1871. The practice spread rapidly and quietly among this class of gamblers and prostitutes until the latter part of 1875, at which time the authorities became cognizant of the fact, and finding, upon investigation, that many women and young girls, as also young men of respectable family, were being induced to visit the dens, where they were ruined morally and otherwise, a City Ordinance was passed forbidding the practice under penalty of a heavy fine or imprisonment, or both. Many arrests were made, and the punishment was prompt and thorough. Men and women, young girls—virtuous, or just commencing a downward career—hardened prostitutes, representatives of the 'hoodhun' element, young clerks, and errand boys who could ill afford the waste of time and money, and young men who had no work to do, were to be found smoking together in the back rooms of laundries in the low, pestilential dens of Chinatown, reeking with filth and overrun with vermin, in the cellars of drinking saloons, and in the houses of prostitution. No one can question the fascination of a vice, the strength of a habit, that will lead people into such degradation for the gratification of the abnormal appetite. No one can question the certainty of moral ruin, the charring and obliteration of every honest impulse and honourable sentiment, the sweeping away of every vestment of modesty by such associations and such surroundings. It needs no signboard to mark the terminus of this road."

The American Senate have lately passed a law upon the subject. Exactly the same difficulty exists in Australia, complaints being made that the Chinese labourers are introducing the drug among the civilized white inhabitants. My hon. and gallant Friend cheered when I said that, in the opinion of some people, opium smoking was no worse than spirit drinking. I hold in my hand authority after authority declaring that the evils which arise from the use of opium are far worse than those produced by the consumption of drink at home. If, however, it were simply as bad as the effects of drinking spirits at home, I think I should have a right to appeal to this House to say that the Government of India should, if possible, get out of a trade which only tends to debase and demoralize instead of elevate mankind. But I believe that there has never been any difference of opinion upon this question. No statesman has ever risen from this Bench, or from that, to speak upon this subject who has ever spoken a word in favour of the trade in India except from a financial point of view. Sir Thomas Wade, who certainly has some knowledge of the effects produced by the use of opium in China, in writing in 1877 upon the Treaty of Cheefoo, said—

> "The evil of opium smoking in China I do not contest. I do not abate it by a parallel between it and the abuse of spirits even among hard-drinking nations. The smoker to whom his pipe has become a periodical requirement is, more or less, on a par with the dram-drinker; but the Chinese constitution, moral or physical, appears to me to be more insidiously invaded in the case of the first. The confirmed smoker is not, or is seldom, at all events, outwardly committed, like the drunkard, to indecorum. The indulgence appears, at the same time, to present a special attraction to the Chinese as compared with other people. The use of it, in my experience, has become more general in the class above that in earlier times addicted to it."

The Marquess of Salisbury, addressing one of the deputations which I attended in 1876, said—

> "The Government does not view with any favour an extension of the system, and there is no project of the kind in existence. Without taking the view as to its moral condemnation which is held by many persons present, I feel that there are inconveniences of principle"—

these are the Marquess of Salisbury's words—

> "connected with it which would have prevented any Government in the present day from introducing it. I entirely disclaim any intention to push the Bengal system farther."

Surely, Sir, there is a great deal to be said against a system which the late Prime Minister declares that no Government ought, in the present day, to introduce. My hon. Friend (Mr. Grant Duff), the present Governor of Madras, when Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, said, on May 10, 1870—

> "There was a great deal to be said against this Bengal monopoly on politico-economical grounds. He supposed no one would invent such a system nowadays; but we did not invent the system; we inherited it from the East India Company, and carried it on in the same way."

Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice used very much the same language on April 3, 1883, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for King's Lynn (Mr. Bourke), the late Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, said—

> "The Opium Question had often been debated in the House; but he had never heard anyone say aught in favour of the traffic from a moral point of view."

It will be seen from the debates which have taken place time after time in this House that no Minister or leading speaker has ever been able to say a word in favour of the character of this revenue. All that has been said has been —"Money we want, money we must have, and we will get that money how we can and when we can, even if it comes from a drug which we say demoralizes our own people, and does a great deal of harm to mankind." And what has been the view of Christian ministers of religion? Surely their authority ought to have some weight. It has been denounced by Christian Churches of every denomination. The Church of England, the Wesleyans, and the Baptists, the Churches of Scotland, and many others, have passed unanimous resolutions against it; and with regard to the Roman Catholic Church, the question was taken up by the very highest authorities of that Church in this country. Years before I touched the question, it was taken up in this House by a noble Earl only lately deceased (the Earl of Shaftesbury), who condemned the traffic, and there were Papers written upon it from Rome of an extremely able character 100 years ago, asking that those who were engaged in promulgating the Christian religion in China to do all they could to put a stop to it. But, in spite of these denunciations, what has been the conduct of the Indian Government? Instead of decreasing, they have always been endeavouring to increase, the revenue derived from the cultivation of the poppy. In 1884, in the Financial Statement, reference was made to the cultivation of opium, and the purchase of the Malwa drug, and an increase in the cultivation having been recommended in that Statement, the system was commenced of purchasing the Malwa drug from the Native Princes and substituting it for Bengal opium for manufacture into Excise opium, in order that there might be a larger quantity for exportation to China. Now, I think it was a monstrous thing that India should not be content with cultivating the drug at home, but that it should become the buyer of it from Native States, in order that the manufactured article might be handed over to China for the corruption of the people of that country. The Financial Statement for 1884-5 says—

> "The Government is indebted to Mr. H. Rivett Carnac, opium agent at Benares, for strengthening its opium revenue during the year 1883, and in a lesser degree in the previous year, by the manufacture and preparation of Malwa opium into a form suited"—

what for?—

> "for local consumption."

Therefore, in order that our revenue might be strengthened, we were to corrupt our own people by buying this drug from Malwa, and endeavouring to get it into a State in which it could be consumed. The Statement adds—

> "It is calculated, so long as the cost of the Malwa drug at 90 degrees consistence, does not exceed Rs. 413 per maund, and the selling price of provision opium is not less than Rs. 1,202 for Patna, and Rs. 1,142 for Benares opium, the scheme for substituting Malwa for Bengal opium for manufacture into Excise opium is, financially speaking, likely to prove successful."

The argument against the abolition of this odious revenue has always been that India cannot afford to lose it. If there were no loss of money involved in the proposals we have made, I dare say the Resolutions we have moved from time to time in this House would have been carried long ago; but as money was likely to be lost by carrying them, they have been effectually resisted. That has been the sound doctrine preached by every Indian Secretary from time immemorial; and I dare say that upon this occasion we shall have a few sympathetic words from my hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for India (Mr. Stafford Howard), and then be told that we cannot dispense with the revenue derived from opium. My hon. Friend the late Under Secretary of State for India (Mr. J. K. Cross), last year, told us that we were really proposing to deprive India of a revenue of £9,000,000 sterling. But it is nothing of the sort. We are going to deprive the Indian Government of nothing of the kind; and if my hon. Friend the present Under Secretary of State will give me his kind attention for a few minutes, I think I can prove what the net opium revenue in India has been during the 10 years ending 1880-1. According to the Report presented to the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), instead of being £9,000,000, it was only £7,000,000 sterling, and of that £2,694,000 came from the Malwa opium, and £4,357,000 net from Bengal opium. Therefore, instead of looking at it as a proposal to get rid of a revenue of £9,000,000 sterling, the question is only, taking 10 years ending 1882-3, one of £4,445,000, so far as the Bengal opium is concerned. It will be seen that the figures varied very little in the 10 years ending 1881-2 and the 10 years ending 1882-3; but prior to those dates the revenue derived was very much less. I attack the Bengal average—namely, £4,445,000; but in 1874-5, £3,264,000 was all that was got net from Bengal opium by the Indian Treasury, and in 1884-5 it was £3,300,000; and the estimate for 1885-6 was £6,547,300, which, deducting £2,650,000 for Malwa opium, leaves for Bengal opium, £3,896,300. I have stated that it is the Bengal revenue which I now propose to attack; and I wish the House to master the fact that in 1884-5 it was £3,300,000 sterling, and not £9,000,000, as has been paraded from time to time. When people say both indoors and out-of-doors that we cannot give up the opium trade because it brings in a sum of £9,000,000 to the Revenue of India, I wish them to understand clearly that during the last two years the surplus annual revenue from the Bengal opium only amounted to £3,300,000. I am reminded by my hon. and gallant Friend beside me (Sir George Balfour) that, as we have often been told, the cultivation of the poppy is a matter of some importance to the cultivator; but I think that that theory was altogether exploded long ago. When the Indian Government proposed to reduce the amount granted to the cultivators of the poppy from five rupees to four and a-half rupees per seer, I believe that at that time the Indian Government found that they required the five rupees instead of four and a-half rupees in order to secure the cultivation. We are, therefore, confined within very narrow limits indeed so far as any advantage the cultivator receives. We have been told over and over again that there is a great deal of difficulty experienced in keeping up the

Revenue from opium; and this is one point to which I wish particularly to call the attention of the House. There is a great deal to be said in favour of substituting other crops. Opium has not only the disadvantage of being a very immoral, but a very uncertain Revenue. There is not one of our Indian financiers who has ever touched opium but who has made that admission. The Marquess of Ripon, Sir Edward Strachey, Sir Evelyn Baring, and others, in their despatches, speak of the difficulty of maintaining the cultivation, and the necessity which might be forced upon them of reducing the quantity of Bengal opium annually offered for sale, owing to the increase in the production and the improvement and the quality of the Persian and Chinese drugs. The Governor General and Council of India, in 1881, writing to the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), says:—

> "The increase in the production and the improvement in the quality of the Persian and Chinese drugs render it doubtful whether a diminished supply of Bengal opium will enhance the price realized at the sales, and may, indeed, render it necessary to reduce the export duty on Malwa opium, and point to one conclusion—namely, that, although the total loss of the Opium Revenue does not appear imminent, it is by no means improbable that it may undergo a considerable diminution. Although the amount of Revenue derived during the last two or three years has been very large, it would be unwise to count upon its continuance at so high a figure."

There is another point mentioned by Mr. Lionel Tennyson in a Paper on the progress and condition of India in 1881-2. Mr. Tennyson says—

> "Fever was prevalent amongst the cultivators. The poppy is being slowly banished from the most fertile lands by the potato and the sugar cane, as the value of those crops is being gradually enhanced by improved communication and European machinery. The system of advances is reputed to be the chief inducement to the cultivator to grow so precarious and troublesome a crop as opium, and that system is now being adopted by firms interested in other crops."

Therefore, there are other crops which those who are interested in the cultivation of opium find they can substitute for the growth of the poppy. Mr. Tennyson goes on to say further—

> "The efforts of the sub-agent to extend poppy cultivation in Agra, Muttra, and Aligarh were not attended with success."

Going on to the Finance Department of India, we find it stated in a letter from the Government of India in December, 1881—

> "On the whole, the evidence goes to show that, although we may be able to retain the present area of cultivation in the Benares Agency, we cannot count with any certainty on being able to extend it. Moreover, in order to retain it, it is not at all improbable that we may be obliged to raise the price paid for crude opium even higher than Rs. 5 the seer."

Then, in the Correspondence with my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) it is said—

> "The general conclusions at which we have arrived are, therefore, as follows:—The competition of other crops in Bengal, the difficulty of extending the cultivation of the poppy, and the increase of production and the improvement in the quality of the Chinese and Persian drugs, are all sources of danger to the Opium Revenue, which are more likely to increase than to diminish. There is no reason to anticipate any falling off in the Revenue during 1882-3, but in subsequent years it is not at all improbable that we may be obliged to diminish the number of chests of Bengal opium offered for sale. Any such diminution would probably involve a considerable loss of Revenue. The total loss of the Revenue at present derived from opium in Bengal would render the Government of India insolvent; and, on that account, any proposals which would involve the loss of so large a sum cannot be considered within the scope of practical politics."

Sir, I will not detain the House with any further quotations of that kind; but I have an abundance of them with me to show not only that the crop is a very precarious one, and that Indian finance may be recouped by the cultivation of other crops, but further that the Indian Revenue may suffer hereafter, owing to the lowering of price by competition in China and other parts. There is, however, another point which I ought to mention. The Indian Revenue which I am now attacking—namely, that derived from Bengal opium, and which amounts to a sum of £3,300,000—is taken from the Indian Reports; and in the calculations which appear there the rupee is counted at 2*s.* sterling, whereas the rupee at the present moment is only worth, I believe, 1*s.* 5½*d.*, and the Indian Government do not really obtain the amount of Revenue which it appears to obtain. There is a very considerable reduction on transmitting it to this country. I do not ask the Indian Government to do anything very rash or very sudden in the matter. I only ask, in the Motion I submit to the House, that they shall gradually do their best to abandon this source of Revenue. I ask that the question shall have the serious attention of the Indian Government, and I ask that it should have that attention in this way. The Revenue of the Indian Government, I am glad to say, has been, within the last few years, in a thriving condition. A little while ago there was a surplus of £2,800,000 sterling, and what did the Indian Government do with it? Very much, I believe, against the views of hon. Members sitting around me, out of that Revenue they took off £216,000 for Patwari cess, and £1,219,000 sterling for Cotton and Import Duties, by which they let in the Manchester cotton to compete with the Native manufactures of India. No one in India asked for the Cotton Duties to be taken off, and it must not be forgotten that the £1,200,000 sterling got rid of in that way was nearly equal to one-third of the whole sum by which I am asking the Indian Government at the present moment to diminish the Revenue derived from this obnoxious drug. In the third place, £1,400,000 was taken off the Salt Duties. Now, I have never, in any speech I have made in this House, spoken against a reduction of the Salt Duties. I have always looked upon it as a most obnoxious tax, and one which it was very hard to levy upon the people of India. The Indian railways, I am glad to say, have also been prosperous. Some of my hon. Friends on this side of the House, and other hon. Members on the other side, tell us that, in view of the uncertainty of the present Indian Revenue, we should make a serious attempt to diminish the expenses of governing India. And I have here some very striking figures on the subject, with which, however, I will not trouble the House. One Governor of India after another has endeavoured to grapple with the subject, and the invariable conclusion arrived at has been that the expenses of Indian rule might be very much reduced without impairing the efficiency of the Government. That, therefore, is a subject which I would commend to the attention of my hon. Friend the present Under Secretary of State for India (Mr. Stafford Howard). If the necessary reforms are to be carried out, and we are not to depend upon the Opium Revenue, it can only be by the general development of the country, and by retaining that assistance which we should require, and which we originally had in the surplus Revenue derived from the railways and from other sources. I ask the attention of the Indian Government to these questions, in order that little by little the country may be freed from the necessity of pandering to the vices of mankind. I have laboured for several years, in my humble way, to secure the suppression of the opium traffic, and I have been induced to do so because I believed that a participation in this trade is a disgrace to this country and a reproach to our laws. Even regarded as a question of sound finance, I believe that the Revenue of India will never be sound so long as it depends upon a source so demoralizing. In raising, as we do, in India a considerable revenue from China from this opium traffic, we are damaging the Revenue of this country from our ordinary trade with China to a much larger extent. I believe that if we fairly consider the question we shall see there is no excuse for this trade. It makes very little difference to me whether the use of opium in China is or is not equal in evil effects to spirit-drinking at home; I look upon that matter as of very little moment in considering the question. With regard to the use of spirituous liquors in this country, we endeavour at home to do our duty—every man in this House, I trust, endeavours to do his duty—fairly and wisely, whatever may be our views on the temperance question, because we feel that the excessive use of alcohol is demoralizing to our people, and adds enormously to the pauper and criminal population of the country. I trust that the Indian Government will be actuated by similar motives in dealing with the opium trade. We, at any rate, shall not relax our efforts to get the Indian Government to set about trying to get rid of a trade which can have but one result—which can only have a damaging and demoralizing result, and which I believe is fatal alike to our commercial interests and to our character as Christians and as moralists. I beg to move the Resolution.

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield), in seconding the Motion, dwelt on the injurious physical effects produced by opium on those who habitually consumed the drug. Many years ago, when he was in Her Majesty's Navy on the Chinese Coast, he saw a highly-educated Chinese gentleman who was brought by the use of opium to such a condition that he resembled a piece of parchment stretched over a skeleton. While we were pleading the cause of temperance at home we were poisoning millions of people in China by encouraging them to eat or smoke opium. The trade very much exasperated the feeling of the Chinese against us, so that they called us "Occidental devils." It was a very serious thing that the Chinese should regard us in this manner; for the trade of all the Eastern Coasts from California to China was passing into the hands of the Chinese, and by our helping to develop the habit of opium smoking amongst the Chinese we were helping to spread the habit all over the countries with which they traded. He remembered that when in Burmah, some 30 years ago, there was very little smoking, and they were a very fine race of people; but now the state of things was very different indeed, and the pernicious habit was fast running through the whole of Burmah. Besides, the evil consequences of using the drug were such that the Revenue of £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 would shortly be eaten up by the expense for police, gaols, and for the general suppression of vice. How, he asked, could we, as a great Christian nation, make strenuous efforts to put down intemperance in our own territories, whilst, at the same time, we were encouraging the whole Chinese race to take this pernicious poison? It was said seriously—Liberal and Conservative Governments alike had told them—that this state of things could not be prevented, because the Indian Government would lose some £3,000,000 as Revenue if the trade were suppressed, and India could not afford to lose such a large proportion of her Revenue; but the House would remember that the country did not always take this low view of its duty as a great Christian nation. If that were so, this country should subscribe a sufficient sum to meet the deficiency and remove this disgrace from itself. How should we like to have ships lying off our Coasts carrying on a smuggling trade, corrupting our officials by bribery, and every night landing tons of this horrible drug? There was only one parallel to the opium trade, and that was the slave trade in the West Indies. When there was a question of suppressing the slave trade, the House, with the cordial support of the country, voted £20,000,000 sterling in order to relieve the country of the stigma of supporting that trade; and yet the gross average Revenue in the present case was something like £3,000,000. He would ask them, if it were a fact that India could not afford to lose £3,000,000 of its Revenue, could not we at home do something to raise the necessary funds, and so relieve ourselves of complicity in this trade, which was inflicting so much moral degradation on the human race? The Asiatic nations thought that this traffic in opium was a disgrace to us.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is expedient that the Indian Government should take measures to terminate gradually its direct connection with the cultivation of the poppy, and the manufacture of and trade in Opium, and that it should use the powers that it possesses to prohibit in British India the cultivation of the poppy, except to supply the legitimate demand of Opium for medical purposes."—(*Sir Joseph Pease.*)

Sir RICHARD TEMPLE (Worcester, Evesham): Mr. Speaker—Sir, I beg leave at once to submit a reply to the Motion just proposed by the hon. Baronet the Member for the Barnard Castle Division of Durham (Sir Joseph Pease), as I have personal and particular knowledge of the subject of opium in the East. Before doing so I wish to offer my tribute to the excellence of the motives which actuate the hon. Baronet, who, indeed, bears a name illustrious in the annals of British philanthropy.

In the first place, I seem to recognize in one of the quotations made by the hon. Baronet an extract from one of my own letters dated some years ago. [Sir Joseph Pease assented.] Well, but he—no doubt with the best intentions—puts his own gloss on what I wrote. But he will forgive me for saying that, quite unintentionally, he has distorted my meaning. What I then meant to say, and do still say, is this—that as the Chinese insist on having opium, it is better that they should get first-class opium, highly-taxed from India, than obtain inferior opium from their own country or elsewhere untaxed. I trust that this House will see that this doctrine is as consistent with true morality as it is with sound finance.

Before proceeding further I must notice another point in the hon. Baronet's speech. He adverts to certain recommendations made by the able opium agent at Benares (Mr. H. Rivett Carnac) regarding the use, in British Indian districts, of Malwa opium from the Native States, and seems to imply that the agent was endeavouring to superadd the Malwa opium to that already produced in the British territories. But, Sir, the use of this drug in British India is highly taxed, and severely restricted, as even the hon. Baronet could desire. Morally, it matters nothing whether the limited supply is produced in Malwa, or in the British districts. The question is purely one of fiscal detail. And if, under some local circumstances, Mr. Carnac preferred to supply the Malwa drug instead of that produced in his own districts, he is not to be blamed; for certainly no officer can be more anxious for the welfare of the people, or more zealous in the service of the State, than he is.

Further, Sir, the hon. Baronet, in the passages to which I have referred, spoke in the most pointed way of opium being poison, and of the Chinese being poisoned. But what right has he to say that the Chinese are thus poisoned? What are we that we should presume to say that? Are we the keepers of our Chinese brethren? Look at the condition of the Chinese. They form the most numerous population under any one dominion on earth. They sustain their numbers, despite famine from failure of rain, and despite bloody revolutions. Their agriculture, for elaboration, is not surpassed anywhere. Their internal trade and inland navigation are among the wonders of the world. Besides physical activity, they are capable of—indeed fond of—intense application mentally. They are distinguished for many domestic virtues. They adhere to a faith which has fundamental principles of pure morality. If they only had robust political institutions, or a good Government, such as India has, they would ascend fast in the scale of nations, and would form a potent addition to any organized Empire such as ours. Then, Sir, are these Chinese to be called a poisoned nation? Are they languishing under the influence of a poisonous drug?

Again, the hon. Baronet has drawn a moving picture of the evils of opium-smoking in China, the opium dens, and so on. With what force would he dilate on the gin-palaces and similar places in London or other European capitals! As to the evils, nobody denies the dreadful effects of excess in consumption of this drug, or of any other stimulant. But if he supposes that moderate consumption is deleterious, is he aware of the scientific evidence, based on medical experience, and submitted to the public through the London Press, some three years ago? It was then indicated that, in reasonable moderation, the use of opium for Orientals is as harmless as that of any known stimulant, and, under certain conditions, is even beneficial. That evidence has not, to this day, been rebutted.

The Seconder of the Motion to which I am replying, the hon. Baronet the Member for the Lichfield Division of Staffordshire (Sir John Swinburne), gave the House an interesting account of a conversation he had some 30 years ago in China with a Chinese gentleman, through an interpreter. That gentleman, no doubt, was a temperance advocate, and vividly depicted the evils of intemperance among his countrymen. But let the procedure be reversed. Let a Chinese traveller now come to London, and converse through an interpreter with some temperance authority — such, for instance, as the hon. Baronet. What horrors he will hear of the lighted spirit shops attracting the poor people by the glare at night, and so on. Now, should we wish our Chinese visitor to infer from that that London is a doomed, a poisoned city, and that the only chance of salvation for Londoners is the suppression of wines and spirits?

Very likely the hon. Baronet opposite (Sir Joseph Pease) would, if he could, deal with us English as strictly as he would with the Chinese. He would mete out even measure all round. Thus this House can appraise the value of his strictures. We can infer that his doctrines could not be practically applied to the Chinese; for we see that he could never apply them to us, with his views regarding temperance — wherein I heartily sympathize with him—and also with his extreme proposals regarding total abstinence and absolute prohibition. [Sir JOSEPH PEASE: No, no!] Well, Sir, I surely cannot be mistaken in believing that he holds the strongest views on these points, which views he would enforce by all possible means. Be that as it may, I submit that the question of opium in China is one of temperance, and runs on all fours with the corresponding question of temperance in England.

There is yet one topic in the hon. Baronet's speech to which I must advert —namely, that of Burmah. He quoted official evidence to prove that opium consumption had been excessive among the Burmese under British rule. I admit that this must have been so at one time. Owing to some local failure, there was not that salutary restriction on opium consumption in British Burmah which has always existed in British India. But the fact that it was duly noticed by the authorities will afford assurance to this House that the evil will be fully remedied—indeed, it probably has been remedied already. In connection with this the hon. Baronet declared his fear that, with our new Chinese frontier consequent on the annexation of Burmah, there would be importation of Chinese opium into British territory. He has thus, perhaps unwittingly, reminded this House of the important fact that India is not the only opium-growing country in Asia; China itself is now the greatest producer by far. Very possibly he is right in fearing that there will be importation from China. I must respectfully warn this House against expecting too much from the British Authorities on that frontier, for the opium from China is most easily smuggled across the border. A man may carry in his waistcoat pocket, as it were, enough of this drug for the consumption of many persons.

And now, Sir, turning from these detached topics, I must proceed to the main topics of the hon. Baronet's Motion. He proposes, first, that the Indian Government should terminate gradually its connection with the cultivation of the poppy and the manufacture of opium; secondly, that it should cease from any concern in the trade in that drug; thirdly, that it should use the powers that it possesses to prohibit in British India the cultivation of the poppy. The sequence of the order of topics may not be quite logical; but I take them as they stand on the Notice Paper. I must bespeak the patience of the House if, for a few moments, I touch on each of them.

Now, first, as to the connection of the Government with the cultivation of the poppy and the manufacture of the drug —this is done not for sustaining or encouraging the production, but for fiscal and administrative purposes of the most legitimate kind. The question at bottom is this—are we justified in highly taxing this drug? Surely, even the hon. Baronet will admit that we are. Then it is not only our right, but our duty, to render that taxation effective, to prevent smuggling, and to stop malpractices. Experience shows that the only way of doing all these desirable things effectually is to maintain the system existing in the British territories—that is, in Eastern India or the mid-Gangetic valley. And what is that system? It is briefly this. No man is allowed to grow the poppy save under Government supervision. Every grower is obliged to bring all his opium to a place appointed by Government. The Revenue officers see that the drug is made up pure and unadulterated; they then cause the drug supply to be made over *en bloc* to the trade at Calcutta—to the highest bidders—for exportation to China. A small quantity only is reserved for home consumption in India under severe restrictions. The money thus received from the highest bidders constitutes the opium tax. This system really prevents opium being illicitly consumed at home, or illicitly exported abroad. If any escapes taxation, it has to run the gauntlet of the strictest system that can be devised—namely, that which I have just sketched. To alter this system would have a bad effect morally; for any alteration would not only allow malpractices to creep into the trade, but would open the door for illicit consumption of a cheap untaxed drug among our British Indian subjects. The hon. Baronet himself should be the first to deprecate that. I happen to speak with knowledge on this point, for I have administered the opium revenue, not only in the British territory of Eastern India, but also in Western India, where it comes from the Native States of Malwa. Now, in Malwa the cultivator is under no particular restrictions; the drug intended for exportation is weighed locally before the fiscal officers, and then despatched to Bombay, where the British export duty is levied. The supervision is not nearly so absolute as under the British system I have described. And what is the consequence? Why, just this—that untaxed and illicit opium filters and percolates from Malwa into the neighbouring British districts of Western India. This much I know; and I infer that the same thing happens still more within the Native States of Malwa itself. For the sake, then, of moderating in British India the consumption of a drug which is dangerous if taken immoderately, I entreat this House to let the Bengal system remain untouched.

In regard to that system the hon. Baronet says that we give subsistence money to the poppy cultivators to encourage them. No; what we give is an advance of cash at the beginning of the season, in consideration of all the trouble to which they are put by reason of the strict system I have described. But it is only an advance on account, and they make good every farthing of it at the end of the season. [Sir JOSEPH PEASE: An advance is the same thing as subsistence money.] I contend that in this case an advance and subsistence money do not amount to the same thing. Why, these cultivators do not actually need subsistence money; they are not indigent; they do not live from hand to mouth; they are flourishing small farmers, or tenants, often with a status little short of peasant proprietorship. The cash advance is only a kind concession, which may just as well be continued, as it in no wise affects the general question.

Next, on the second part of the Motion, the hon. Baronet wishes that the Government should cease from any concern in the opium trade. But has the Government any such concern? Is it, in any true sense, a trader? Why, certainly not. There is a great private trade in opium, having its headquarters at Calcutta. The traders are eminent and wealthy persons of several nationalities. These famous firms have fleets of the swiftest ships that ply in Eastern waters. They are the enterprizing traders, and they justly reap the profits of the trade, after the Government has levied its revenue in the way I have described. There are so many hon. Members now sitting around who have resided in Calcutta, and who know all this so well, that I need not dilate further on the misapprehension which dwells in this part of the hon. Baronet's proposal.

I may, therefore, go straight to the third and last of the topics—namely, the proposal that the Indian Government should use the powers it possesses to prohibit in British India the cultivation of the poppy. Pray, what are the powers which the Government possesses for such a purpose? I hope that the House will mark these words. Would such powers, if put forth, be lawful; could they be used without previous legislation; would any Legislature in India be induced to pass such a law? The Government, no doubt, has a giant's strength; but ought it to use such strength as a giant? Surely this House will bear in mind that the poppy cultivation is valuable, being worth millions sterling; that it helps tens of thousands of hard-working families to earn a comfortable livelihood. Are these people to be deprived of their profitable industry, because the hon. Baronet and his fellow-thinkers hold that the Chinese are better without the drug, forgetting that they, the Chinese, and not we, ought to be the judges of that? Hon. Gentlemen opposite, both above and below the Gangway, have always stood up for freedom. Surely they will see that this proposal involves the grossest interference with the liberty of the subject, and is about the most tyrannous proposal that ever was submitted to this House. Even if—what is to me incredible—such a thing were enacted, how is it to be carried out? There would have to be a vexatious field-to-field visitation throughout extensive districts; the visitation would almost be cottage-to-cottage; for the cultivators would grow the poppy in their backyards, and the gardens in the precincts of their cottages. A band of preventive watchmen would be required; and even then, when the motive of profit is so strong, there would be much evasion, and a train of demoralizing circumstances. I need not detain the House in adverting to the awkward claims for compensation which might arise. But more, the proposed prohibition would only apply to British Indian subjects in Eastern India. It could never be applied to the Native States in Malwa, or Western India, which are not under our civil jurisdiction internally, but only under our political control externally. With what feelings would our British subjects, then, see their profitable cultivation stopped, while their fellow-cultivators in Native States went on, without let or hindrance, more merrily than ever? Surely such an injurious inequality would provoke discontent, perhaps even disloyalty.

Now, Sir, passing from the three main topics, I beg, before resuming my seat, to advert to the general argument which pervades the hon. Baronet's speech, inspired, as it is, with such benevolent sentiments. It is assumed, apparently, that the Chinese hate the drug, and would gladly be quit of it, were they not afraid of the British Government. I may assure the House that such notions are absurd. Why, the upper-class Chinese consume this Indian opium because it is the best. They are so fond of it that they are resolved to have it at any price. It is our taxation that makes that price so dear to them. The Indian opium, being of an unequalled quality, and being limited in quantity, stands towards all the other kinds of opium of China or elsewhere in the same relation that champagne stands towards the wines of Europe. If, apart from the upper classes, the Chinese people at all abhor opium, why do they grow the poppy to an extent unknown in India or any other country—an extent, too, which is constantly widening? And the opium they make therefrom is not at all for exportation, but for domestic consumption—that is, for themselves alone. There the Government is despotic to a degree not permissible in the British Empire. If it wished, it could hinder, if not suppress, the cultivation with some sort of success. But it does nothing of the sort. We cannot say, then, that either the Government or the people have any sincere dislike to the thing. As they enjoy its use, they must have actually a liking for it. Thus the catchword, that is often current, of opium being "forced" on them, is a contradiction in terms. Why, then, it will be asked, do Chinese authorities often complain about the Indian opium? Merely for this reason—that they are (not unnaturally) jealous of the Revenue which the British Government derives from the taxation levied on the Chinese people. They wheedle and entice as many Englishmen as they can into the belief that the drug is hated. Thus they throw dust in the eyes of benevolent English people. They hope somehow to discredit the Indian Opium Revenue and to cause its abandonment. They trust that the money diverted thus from British coffers may flow into Chinese coffers. They would levy the tax for themselves if they could only persuade the English to give it up. I do not complain of this, their object—I merely expose it. Its intent, however, is not moral at all; it is only pecuniary. But I submit that India is entitled to this Revenue, as the drug is produced in her territories by her people, and financed by traders in her limits. She has got the hold of it, and she should keep that.

No doubt, as the hon. Baronet has said this evening, several religious communities in England for whom we entertain the highest respect animadvert upon the Indian Opium Revenue. What can I say except that they labour under misapprehension of the circumstances in India and of the realities in China? Indeed, the subject has become shrouded in unintentional misrepresentations.

I admit that the hon. Baronet shows that his particular proposals embrace little more than half the amount of the Indian Opium Revenue—say, £4,000,000, out of something less than £7,000,000, net, in round numbers. It remains for him to show how, if the Bengal or Eastern Revenue were sacrificed, the Western remainder could be saved. But be the exact amount of loss what it may, it would be, at the least, very considerable, and British Revenue is not to be trifled with in a light and airy way without due regard to weighty facts, especially as all Revenues received in India are expended for beneficent purposes.

Again, if I understood him rightly, the hon. Baronet seemed to imply that the Indian authorities hold that the money is wanted and must be had, the moral difficulty notwithstanding—*quocunque modo rem.* Now, I, for one, would scorn to use any such arguments in this House on behalf of the Opium Revenue. If it be really wrong morally, then let us, at any sacrifice, abjure it. But if it be right—as I say it is—then, and then only, let us retain it. Our taxation, instead of encouraging or stimulating, has the same effect of checking consumption as it has in all other cases. So far from being immoral, it actually subserves a moral purpose. What use would it be for us to give this up, except either to transfer the money to the

Chinese Treasury, or let the Chinese have the choicest opium untaxed? Even if, by a stretch of imagination, the hon. Baronet succeeded in stopping the Indian poppy culture, what would he have brought about? Why, merely this—an augmentation, corresponding to the Indian diminution, of the poppy culture in China, in Persia, in Turkey, and in other regions suited for its production.

After all, it is a question of temperance. The Indo-Chinese case is *in consimili casu* with the British or European case. The hon. Baronet begins at the wrong end. Let him, if he can, persuade the Chinese Mandarins that Indian opium is poison. Then the consumption, and with it the Revenue, would die a natural death. And the blessed end—in the hon. Baronet's estimation—would be consummated. But I fear that he might as well try to persuade the Parisians that champagne is poison. Why does he trouble us—what have we done, except to tax the drug? And such taxation is not evil. Meanwhile, if his present Motion were accepted by this House—as I hope and believe it will not be—then none of the moral benefits which he sighs for would be gained, and, *per contra*, many moral evils would be incurred of which he little dreams.

Mr. MAC IVER (Devon, Torquay) said, he was bound to say that, no matter how much he might, in other respects, disagree with the hon. Baronet who had introduced the Motion (Sir Joseph Pease) to the House, he could corroborate what he had stated in respect of one matter—that there had never been a more terrible experience than that of the effects of the consumption of opium upon the Burmese population. Both in the rural districts and in the towns, the condition of the Burmese who yielded to the use of opium was deplorable. The hon. Baronet, speaking to the general question, had stated that it had poisoned millions, whereas the hon. Baronet the Member for East Worcestershire (Sir Richard Temple) gave it as his opinion that the drug had, on the whole, been beneficial to mankind. Well, he (Mr. Mac Iver), judging from his experience in Burmah, must say that he could not agree with the latter; and whatever might be the general view held as to the effects of opium, there could, at all events, be no question that it was a source of great danger to the Burmese. Among the Chinese a great many consumed the drug in such moderate quantities that it was not very deleterious, while, on the other hand, a great many suffered from its abuse. But among the Burmese there was no such thing as moderation in the use of opium; and, whatever might be the case among the Chinese, among the Burmese, when a man began to smoke opium, he was a lost man, physically and morally. When a magistrate in Burmah, he had been asked to send men to prison for "dangerous livelihood" on no other evidence than they had taken to opium smoking. He did not suggest that as a new method of applying coercion; but when a man became the slave of opium, then he was a danger to society, and the authorities found it necessary to keep an eye on him. Having resided for some years in Burmah, he could tell them that the use of the drug in that country led to a large amount of dacoity. There was a mass of evidence from all officials of the terrible effects of the consumption of opium. The hon. Baronet had stated that there was no opium in Burmah until we—the English people—went there. [Sir Joseph Pease: I said next to none.] The fact was that we had opened opium shops in Burmah in order to prevent smuggling and the consequent loss of Revenue. He believed, also, that if a law were passed to make it penal to consume opium in Burmah, it would meet with the moral approval of three-quarters of the population. It was not the case that we had poisoned and demoralized the whole people; but we had certainly put facilities and temptation in their way. With regard, however, to the Resolution of the hon. Baronet, there was a difference between looking after a population for which we were responsible, and endeavouring to look after the morality of a population of over 300,000,000 for which we were not responsible, and at the expense of a population for whom we were. As to the amount of Revenue we obtained out of the sale of opium in Burmah, it only amounted to £100,000. He denied that we forced opium upon the Chinese; the arrangement between them and the Indian Government was of their own making. In China the poorer classes consumed home-brewed opium, while only the richer classes consumed the finer and more expensive drug from India. And if we discontinued permission to grow the poppy in British India, we should not prevent the consumption of the drug in China. The Chinese people would grow for themselves more of a worse article, doing probably far more harm. The result of this prohibition, if carried out, would simply be to make the situation analogous to the condition of England if France, in a fit of philanthropy and temperance, decided to forbid the exportation of its wines to England. The classes who now drank wine would have to fall back on beer and gin. The net Revenue derived in British India from the opium trade was £7,000,000. [Sir JOSEPH PEASE dissented.] That was so, undoubtedly. Whatever the amount immediately sacrificed, the proposal, if carried to its logical conclusion, involved the sacrifice of the whole Opium Revenue, and that averaged £700,000 net; and if the Opium Revenue was removed they would suffer the loss of this sum of £7,000,000. If, in the interests of the Christian religion and morality, they desired to show their nobility—and a cheap nobility it was, for it was at the expense of other people—let them do it at the cost of the British taxpayers, to whom they were responsible in that House. If they wished to carry out this theory fully, they would have to sacrifice a still larger sum than the £7,000,000. They would have to compensate the Native Princes. This would take £1,000,000 or £2,000,000 more. Then there were the cultivators in the Native States to be thought of; and if the House perpetrated this act of tyranny they would soon have to contemplate a very large sum indeed. Well, they were getting familiarized with offers of large amounts; he was afraid they were getting debauched by the talk of giving away millions counted by hundreds. If the House really wanted to be virtuous, let it be virtuous with its own money. Irrespective of the impossible expense involved in this matter at present, there were in India over 1,000,000 acres under opium cultivation. There were 2,000,000 men employed, and that meant, with their families, 10,000,000 people; and it was proposed, for the purpose of effecting no good that he could see, at one stroke to throw 10,000,000 people, our fellow-subjects, not represented in that House, out of occupation and the means of living; and all that in order to gratify a theory and to prove a case, which might have been a good case once when opium was forced on the Chinese, but which now could only lead to increased cultivation in China, especially in Yunnan.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London) said, it had been urged that the case as to opium was the same as the case as to spirits in this country, and that they were responsible in the same way. He did not admit that argument of his hon. Friend. He held that the two cases were entirely dissimilar. As to spirits, the whole course of their legislation had been repressive. Spirits were highly taxed, and Sir Wilfrid Lawson wished them to go further in that direction. His hon. Friend the Member for Worcestershire (Sir Richard Temple) urged that they were doing the same as to opium; but, on the contrary, they had frequently urged forward the cultivation of opium. After the Minute which had been issued, if he recollected rightly, by his hon. Friend when he held Office at Calcutta, he did not see how it could be denied that the Indian Government had done all it could to introduce and encourage the growth of opium; and he could not but feel that the Government was responsible for a very great increase. He admitted that it was a very difficult subject. They were trustees for the Indian people, and they would not be justified in throwing away millions of Revenue.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. STAFFORD HOWARD) (Gloucester, Thornbury): In rising to take part in the debate at this early stage, I do so because I think it is desirable that the House, as soon as possible, should know the views of the Government on the merits of the proposition submitted by my hon. Friend. My hon. Friend was good enough, in introducing the Resolution, to prophesy what I should say in answer to it. He told the House that I should do as my Predecessors have done on similar occasions — namely, treat him with a few words of sympathy, and then say that, upon account of financial considerations, the proposition submitted to the House is impracticable. I am afraid that I shall not disappoint my hon. Friend in that respect, although I may claim to have even greater sympathy with the objects and principles he has at heart than some of those who have gone before. But, at the same time, I am no more insensible to the practical difficulties of the case than my hon. Friend would be if he stood in my place at this Table. I should like to draw the attention of the House, and especially of my hon. Friend, to the progress which this question has made since he first took it up and introduced the question to the House. The Motion which he has made to-night differs in some important respects from those of former occasions. Both in its omissions, and in the additions to it, it tells of a great deal of progress from the hon. Baronet's point of view. If hon. Members will refer to former discussions on the subject, they will see that our relations with China formed the chief topic on almost every occasion when this question has been debated. To-night the word "China" is not mentioned in the Resolution, and my hon. Friend has hardly mentioned it in his speech. When the hon. Baronet first introduced this Motion he prefaced it by deprecating the insistence of this country in importing opium into China against the wishes of the Chinese Government. On the second occasion, instead of deprecating the insistence of the country in importing opium into China, my hon. Friend insisted that the traffic was contrary to the principles of morality, and ought to be done away with at once; but, at the same time, he offered to pledge the revenues of this country to some undefined extent in order to assist the Revenues of India in the loss they would sustain, having been prompted to that, I believe, by the taunt levelled at him by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) that he was trying to be virtuous at other people's expense. In the following year my hon. Friend moved an Address to Her Majesty, asking that China might be treated as an independent State in the negotiations that were going on for some alterations in connection with the opium traffic. That has been conceded; and I understand my hon. Friend and those who act with him are satisfied with what has been done as to the importation of opium into China, so fer as the duty is concerned. My hon. Friend has said that he is not sure whether China had only got the best she could, or whether she has really got all she was entitled to. In reply, I think I can show my hon. Friend that, at all events, China got everything she asked for; and therefore it may be inferred that she got all she thought she was entitled to. In the negotiations which took place between the Chinese Government and Earl Granville, the British Government proposed a settlement on the basis that a fixed rate should be imposed at the various ports. There had previously been, I understand, rates varying in amounts. The Chinese Government rejected that proposal, and proposed a uniform rate of 80 taels at all the ports. Earl Granville accepted the basis of that proposal, but suggested the uniform rate of 70 instead of 80 taels. That was rejected by the Chinese Government, and Earl Granville gave way, acceding to the terms originally asked for. The Chinese Government, therefore, got all they asked for when they desired to make an alteration as to the levying of the duty in their own ports. I need not say anything more upon the question of China, except to notice what two or three Members have laid great stress upon—namely, that we are, to a great extent, still poisoning the people of China with opium, or doing the best we can to poison them. Sympathizing with the view of my hon. Friend, I would ask hon. Members to look through the evidence bearing on that point. It does seem to me that what has been brought forward by one or two hon. Members who have spoken against the Resolution is true, and that is that the opium which goes into China is consumed by the upper classes, who do not, as a rule, abuse it, and in no case finds its way to the lower classes, who consume what has been described as the "cheap and nasty" opium, grown in their own country. But, coming back to the general question of the trade itself and the relation of the Government to it, I observe that my hon. Friend has again made a considerable alteration in the demands which he made when he originally introduced the question. In the first Resolution submitted to the House, he desired that the Government of India should be encouraged to take steps gradually to withdraw from this trade. Now he has got as far as to ask the House to declare point blank that it is expedient that the Government of India should withdraw gradually from this trade; and, further, that it should take steps to prohibit it altogether in British India. That is a considerable advance upon the original demands of the hon. Baronet; but I would venture to point out to him that, as the Motion is at present drawn, the second part is quite incompatible with the first; because I cannot understand—and my hon. Friend does not explain how, if we are going to prohibit the cultivation of the poppy altogether, we are to withdraw gradually afterwards. With regard to the larger question of the prohibition of the cultivation of the poppy, it has been asked whether such a thing is possible. Well, I suppose it would be possible if they were determined to do it regardless of consequences. But it is right to point out that those who are responsible for doing these things must have some regard to the consequences which would probably follow from such action. The hon. Member for Torquay (Mr. Mac Iver) told us that there were large numbers of persons who are dependent upon the cultivation of the poppy; and, if it were suddenly prohibited, surely that would give rise to dangerous discontent in certain parts of the country. Again, although the poppy might be prohibited, the demand for it would still exist, and there would be immense temptation to the evasion of the law and illicit dealing, which would create still further complications. Then there is the inevitable answer as to the loss of Revenue which the Indian Government would sustain, and my hon. Friend had some altercation with the hon. Member for Torquay as to the figures which that loss would represent. That loss, according to a calculation which I have made this morning, if the Government were to prohibit the cultivation of the poppy, would be something like £5,000,000. No doubt, in one sense, as my hon. Friend does not propose to interfere with the Malwa opium, and as it is almost certain that, if we prohibit the cultivation of opium in British India, the Malwa opium would increase in exactly the same proportion as the decrease in the production of opium in our own districts, we would reap an increased Revenue from Malwa opium, so that we should not lose the whole of the Revenue now derived from opium produced in British India. That, I believe, would reduce the sum to something like £2,176,000. Even that sum, however, would be a serious thing for the Government of India at the present time; and no suggestion has been made by my hon. Friend, as far as I can see, as to how it is to be replaced if it is given up. Then there is another argument against him; and that is the danger—for I believe it is a danger—of driving people from the consumption of opium to the consumption of something still worse, and that is the local spirits, the manufacture of which, by themselves, it would be almost impossible to prevent. There would be the danger of acquiring a taste for these things, and of jumping from the frying-pan into the fire, if you force them to give up opium. Then, in connection with the exportation to China, my hon. Friend's proposal would do very little good; because whatever the decrease might be on the one side it would be counterbalanced by an increase in the Malwa opium, which would still be transported to China, and the traffic would go on practically just the same as it does now. Perhaps my hon. Friend would be inclined to go further, and to say that we should take no half-measures in prohibiting the cultivation in India; that we must not stick at trifles when there are moral considerations to be thought of; and that, therefore, we must prohibit the cultivation throughout India altogether. Nor is it possible to stop the trade throughout India altogether. In certain districts, as has been pointed out by the hon. Member for Torquay (Mr. Mac Iver), the Native Chiefs carry on the cultivation under Treaty agreements with the Government of India, and these would have to be altered and re-arranged, if not superseded altogether; and if so, and if the traffic should be stopped, they would naturally and inevitably require to be compensated. You could not deprive them of their Treaty engagements unless you compensated them for their loss. The loss to the whole Revenue, Imperial and Provincial, with compensation added, as far as I can make out, would amount to at least £11,000,000 per annum. Therefore, if we are determined to stop the cultivation of the poppy altogether, we must be prepared to sacrifice the sum of at least £11,000,000 a-year. On one occasion my hon. Friend, when in a more generous mood, offered to pledge the House to make up any deficiency in the Revenues of India caused by his proposed action; but he has not done so on this occasion. He has progressed in his demands, but gone back in his generosity. That is not the case with the hon. Member for the City of London (Sir Robert Fowler). He is always generous; I never knew him otherwise; and, at a meeting held some time ago at Bristol, the hon. Member said that, in his opinion, the only way of solving the difficulty was for this country to make good whatever loss might be sustained. [Sir ROBERT FOWLER: Hear, hear!] I should like to quote the language of the Government of India on this subject, contained in a very exhaustive despatch sent out by the Government of India in reply to inquiries made by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), when he was Secretary of State for India, in consequence of the Motion made by my hon. Friend the Member for Durham (Sir Joseph Pease) some years ago. On page 18 of that Correspondence, paragraph 59, the Government of India say—

> "It cannot be too clearly understood that neither by any measure tending to develop the resources of the country, nor by any increase of taxation which is practically within the range of possibility, nor by any reduction of expenditure, could the Government of India, in any adequate way at present, hope to recoup the loss which would accrue from the suppression of the poppy cultivation in Bengal."

Further on they say—

> "But the difficulties of the problem have to be fairly faced. The hard facts of the case, whether from the Chinese or Indian point of view, have to be borne in mind. Those facts can neither be altered, nor can their significance be attenuated, by any enunciation of abstract principles. It is, therefore, essential that all who are interested in the question should have clearly before their eyes the opinion of those who, for the time being, are responsible for the conduct of the Indian finances. That opinion, as we venture to formulate it, is that the Government of India is at present quite unable to devise any means by which the loss of Revenue, consequent on the suppression of the poppy cultivation in Bengal, could be recouped, and that, until such means be devised, the loss of the Bengal Opium Revenue would result in the normal annual Expenditure of the Government being greater than its receipts; that is to say, that India would be insolvent. We wish to state this fact, in language which admits of no misapprehension, in order that those who may have to deal with this matter should do so with a perfect knowledge of the facts of the case, and after due warning that any present attempt to abandon the Opium Revenue, whilst conferring a very doubtful benefit on the population of China, would do incalculable harm to the 250,000,000 of people over whom we rule in India."

If that were true then, it is doubly true now. The hon. Baronet stated that the Indian Revenue was in a flourishing condition some years ago, and he mentioned the mode in which the surplus was spent. But at the present time that is not the case, the Indian Government having had to incur serious expenditure on war charges and in regard to the operations lately carried out in Burmah. We had a debate in this House the other day as to whether the Indian Revenues should bear the expense of the operations in Burmah; and I must say that I observed on that occasion that the hon. Baronet did not vote in favour of imposing these charges upon the Home Government, so as to relieve the Revenue of India and render it less necessary to raise income by the Opium Duties. The hon. Baronet made a serious charge against the Government of India. He said it appeared to him that they had, whenever their Revenue fell off, increased the amount of opium exported so as to make up the deficiency. Well, I hope to be able to show the hon. Baronet that that is an absolutely unfounded charge. What are the facts of the case? Why, the localities in which the poppy is cultivated are the localities which are the most favourable for its cultivation, and are the localities in which it was grown before the introduction of British rule. The Government of India has always gone upon the principle of raising the maximum amount of Revenue from the minimum amount of production—a policy advocated by the hon. Baronet himself in one of the speeches he made in this House. The Indian Government, furthermore, has always induced Native States in which the poppy cultivation was unknown not to cultivate it; and, as a matter of fact, it is not cultivated in those States at the present moment. It is true that in spite of all this the Opium Revenue increased, and increased largely, up to a certain time; but I would call attention to the fact that that increase has now come to an end, and that, if anything, it has turned into a decrease; and it is fair, no doubt, that the hon. Baronet and those who are associated with him in this matter should take credit to themselves for having to some extent, through the manner in which they have acted on the Indian Government, brought about that result. I have here the figures showing the net Revenue from the export of opium to

China and of the area of land devoted to the cultivation of the poppy. These figures give the net Revenue and total areas for the years 1870-1 to the years 1884-5. In 1870-1 the net Revenue was £7,657,000—I should say that these statistics include Malwa opium. The Revenue increased with some ups and downs until, in 1880-1, it amounted to £8,451,000. Since then it has gone down almost every year until the amount received in 1884-5 was only £5,849,440. As to the exports, at one time they reached as much as 94,835 chests of opium—in 1879-80—but in 1880-1 the figure fell to 82,392 chests, and in 1884-5 to 75,391 chests, showing a very substantial decrease in the amount of exportation. As to the area of cultivation, in 1870-1 the total number of acres was 515,851; it increased in 1879-80 to 562,260 acres; and now, according to the last Return in 1883-4, it has been reduced to 505,845 acres. That again shows a regular and substantial decrease—there has been a substantial decrease under all the three heads that I have mentioned. I think those figures ought to satisfy my hon. Friend—at any rate, they are an answer to the charge he has made against the Government of India, that they have always increased their Opium Revenue when they have been in want of money. I believe they are in want of money now, and no doubt one of the reasons for that is the great decrease which has taken place in the amount of Revenue they derive from this source. There is a question as to whether the Government should not withdraw altogether from the opium monopoly, and have no direct dealing with the matter. If it could be shown that any good would result from the change the Government would not object to it; but we cannot see that any good would arise; on the contrary, we think that any change would do more harm than good, besides causing a loss to the Indian Government. The question formed the subject of serious discussion in 1878, and the decision arrived at was contrary to the view of the hon. Baronet.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I did not raise that question in 1878. I only dealt with the question of the payment of money to the cultivators.

MR. STAFFORD HOWARD: Yes; the sustentation, or assistance money, as it was called. But that is one of the chief elements in the system which connects the Government with this trade; and, if any alteration is to be made, it must be made so that we shall have the same relation with the trade in Bengal that we have with the trade in the Native Provinces. [Sir JOSEPH PEASE: No, no!] What does the hon. Baronet want, then? If the Government refuse to give money to the cultivators, perhaps he thinks no one else should, and that, in an indirect way, the cultivation of the poppy should be got rid of. It may be that, but the hon. Baronet did not say so in his speech. The Government believe that the system at present carried on is the best; they think that, under the system which prevails, they are able to control the cultivation of the poppy, and keep upon it those restrictions which are necessary in the interests of morality. That is the reason they decline to make the alteration. The Government of India are perfectly alive to the state of public opinion in regard to this matter. Moreover, they are perfectly alive—it is stated fairly enough in the despatch I referred to just now—to the insecurity of this Revenue from various causes which I need not go into. I think they have shown themselves determined to look to every source from which they can derive an income less precarious than that derivable from the opium trade. In 1880 the Prime Minister admitted that India must be in an insecure financial position so long as she relied so much upon this Opium Revenue. The danger, therefore, is known to the Indian Government, and, so far as they can, they will endeavour to find means to guard against it. There is another view of the subject which I must say a few words upon before I deal with the question of the opium trade with Burmah. Like others who oppose this Motion, the hon. Member opposite (Sir Richard Temple) has raised the objection that we have no right—seeing the large sum we raise on alcohol at home—to force our views upon other countries. I am bound to say that, strongly as I feel on the subject of temperance, there is a great deal in that argument. I think this kind of virtue, like charity, ought to begin at home; and if I am to draw a comparison between the effects produced by the consumption of alcohol and those produced by the consumption of opium in China or elsewhere, I am bound to come to the conclusion that the evil effects of alcohol are, on the whole, greater than those of opium. I take the book which is circulated by the hon. Baronet (Sir Joseph Pease) and his Society, called *Medical Testimonies as to the Effects of Opium Smoking;* and in the preface, which is written by Sir James Risdon Bennett, I find he uses these words—

> "That the moderate habitual use of opium, whether smoked or eaten, as of alcohol or tobacco, may be compatible with health and comfort is perfectly true; but it is not the less true that opium is a dangerous poison, and not the less pernicious because, when taken habitually, its action is very insidious."

But exactly the same may be said of alcohol, and if I had time I could quote similar evidence of many leading medical men who were examined before the Lords' Committee on Intemperance to show that alcohol is a most "dangerous poison," and is most "pernicious" and "insidious." As to alcohol being insidious, I have heard its action humorously described by an American in this way—First the man takes a drink; then the drink takes another drink; then, last of all, the drink takes the man. If it is true of opium that it is insidious, it is equally true of alcohol. Then Sir James Risdon Bennett goes on to say—

> "That drunkenness and the immoderate use of alcohol are the occasion of greater evils, whether physical and moral, or individual and social, than are those attendant on the free use of opium, however indulged in, I should be quite ready to concede."

Then, I say, it would be Pharisaic virtue to insist upon a foreign country giving up the use of opium, or rather to insist upon India ceasing to derive income from the sale of opium, whilst we at home derive the income from something which is quite as bad, and, in my opinion, a great deal worse. Not long ago a Government was turned out of Office in this country on this very question—because it was suggested that the duties on alcoholic drinks should be raised to a slight degree. That did not look like a very virtuous country anxious to put a stop to the sale of these deleterious articles. The hon. Baronet referred to the Christian Churches as favouring his view upon the opium question, and upon that I would remark that these Churches do not feel a delicacy in accepting money for the building of cathedrals from those who have made their fortunes by the manufacture of whisky and stout. I would make two practical suggestions to the hon. Baronet, the adoption of which, I believe, would be much more useful than the bringing forward of Motions such as that we are now discussing. Let the hon. Baronet and his friends agitate for the increase of the duties on alcohol in this country, and then, when we get sufficient money to spare, we can devote it to recouping India for the loss which she may sustain by the adoption of some drastic measure for the suppression of the opium trade. My second suggestion is more practical. I am told that the balance of trade as between India and China is very much against China—about £9,000,000 I think—owing to the vast quantity of produce going from India to China. As between China and this country the balance is against us, in consequence of the immense quantity of tea we import. It has even been said, and no doubt with truth, that China pays for her Indian opium with the income derived from Chinese tea sold in this country. I do not know whether the hon. Baronet or the hon. Gentleman who spoke just now have thought of this; but if they are in the habit of consuming Chinese tea, it must give them a start of horror when they reflect that in drinking Chinese tea they are encouraging Chinamen to consume opium. My suggestion, therefore, is that my hon. Friend, and others who agree with him, should use Indian tea, which, I believe, is very good, instead of Chinese tea. Even if the Indian tea is not very good, my hon. Friend should still drink it, sweetening it with the reflection that he is advancing the interests of morality in assisting to deprive the Chinese of the means of buying opium. In this way he can practise a virtue for the benefit of those in whose welfare he is so much interested. And now a word with regard to Burmah. I admit that the evidence against the abuse of opium in Burmah is stronger than that relating to any other place, and, from Reports I have read from Sir Charles Aitchison, it does seem that opium has a much worse effect on the Burmese than on anyone else; and I am afraid that we are more responsible for this traffic in Burmah than elsewhere. But there, again, improvement has taken place. Restrictions have been placed upon the use of the drug with very beneficial results. I hold in my hand an account of the seers of opium sold in Burmah in each year from 1880-1 to 1884-5, and it seems that the total seers decreased between those years from 54,265 to 41,993. The Revenue, no doubt, has increased, but that is mainly because of the great enhancement of the price, which was one of the suggestions made in order to reduce the consumption, and which has been in the main successful. The Revenue has increased Rs.14,31,738 to Rs.15,56,008. The number of shops has been reduced from 67 in 1881 to 18 in 1884-5, so that great progress has been made in Burmah in the direction desired by the hon. Gentleman. Certain drastic proposals have been suggested in order to get rid of the use of the drug in Burmah; but those who are best qualified to give an opinion upon the matter do not think it desirable to proceed to the length proposed. But I am glad to say—for I entirely sympathize with the hon. Baronet in this matter—that the Chief Commissioner and those who assist him contemplate taking as soon as they can more drastic measures than those hitherto adopted to prevent the great evils which arise from the abuse of opium in Burmah. An inquiry has been set on foot, and a very interesting Report has been presented for the first year. Amongst other things recorded are the following facts:—that in the district of Arakan there are only two shops now, and the consumption has decreased to two-thirds of what it was in 1881. It is reported also that the consumption of opium has been reduced in the Province of Irrawaddy, and also in Tenasserim and Pegu. On the whole, the consumption has decreased by 22 per cent in four years, whilst the population is estimated to have increased by 16 per cent. Therefore, at all events as regards Burmah, the Government are on the right track. It has been objected that there has been an increase of smuggling, and that is used as an argument for an increase in the number of shops. It has been found, however, that with an increase in the number of shops there is an equal increase in the temptations to consumption. Therefore, I am glad to find that the Commissioner, in his Report, suggests that it would be better to use all the agencies at our disposal to prevent smuggling, rather than revert to the old system by increasing the number of shops. I do not wish to descend to that lowest level of morality, as the Prime Minister once described it, referring to gentlemen in official positions—namely, "Promising what you cannot perform;" but I will tell the hon. Baronet that the Memorial which was sent to the Secretary of State for India some time ago on the subject of opium in Burmah, and the future treatment of the question in Upper Burmah, has been forwarded to the Viceroy; and I am quite sure from what I have seen of the attitude of the authorities in Burmah, and of the attitude of the Government of India, that this Memorial, which is very strong and striking, and with which I have great sympathy, will receive the consideration which it ought to receive, looking at the quarter from which it comes, and the principles and objects which it has in view. I cannot promise more than that; but I hope that after my statement the hon. Baronet will not put the House to the trouble of a division, but will be satisfied with the progress which has been made on the question, and will withdraw the Motion before the House.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) said that, however important the Opium Revenue might be to India, still, if it were wrong in itself, we were bound to carry on the Government of India by some other means. But, after all, this was not a matter of Indian Revenue. What he held was that if the Chinese did not get opium from India they would get it from some other place. He would point out that this Motion to put down the opium traffic was not for the benefit of the people of India, but for the benefit of third parties —the Chinese. It was not necessary on behalf of the people of India generally to prohibit the traffic in opium, because the people of India were not generally greatly addicted to the use of opium; but he admitted that the Indo-Chinese population of Burmah were, and if it were possible to stop smuggling there, then he thought the Government might go so far as to prohibit the opium traffic in Burmah. He was very much surprised to hear his hon. Friend who moved the Resolution (Sir Joseph Pease) say that he was not in favour of the total prohibition of the use of spirituous liquors, though he was for the total prohibition of the consumption of opium. If his hon. Friend were for the total prohibition of the use of spirituous liquors, then he might urge with more force that the opium traffic should be totally prohibited, since both opium and drink were both exceedingly deleterious. The hon. Gentleman was proceeding to give an account of the condition of the people in the Province of Behar, where opium was accessible to every man, woman, and child, when——

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present,

House adjourned at Eight o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 5th May, 1886.

MINUTES.]—SUPPLY—*considered in Committee Resolutions* [May 3] *reported.*

PUBLIC BILLS — *Ordered — First Reading* — Jurors' Detention * [202]; Mining Leases (Cornwall and Devon)* [204]; Stannaries Act (1869) Amendment * [203].

Second Reading—Municipal Franchise (Ireland) [9]; Probation of First Offenders [39], *debate adjourned;* Representation of the People Act (1884) Extension [25], *debate adjourned;* Married Women (Maintenance in Case of Desertion) [111]; Terms of Removal (Scotland) * [187]; Parliamentary Franchise [124], *debate further adjourned.*

Committee — Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday [27]—R.P.

Third Reading—Infants [139], and *passed.*

Withdrawn—Quarry (Fencing) [185].

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE (IRELAND) BILL.—[BILL 9.]

(*Mr. James O'Brien, Mr. Timothy Harrington, Mr. Richard Power, Mr. Mayne, Mr. Peter M'Donald.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. JAMES O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, he thought the House would agree with him that there was now no need of argument upon this subject, and no longer any reason for stating a case in favour of this measure. It was not too much to assume that all Parties in that House were now agreed that the opposition which had been for so many years offered to that measure, or to measures of a similar import, had been unfair and unwise; and they all also recognized how imprudent it had been to deny to Ireland the reforms which had been so long enjoyed and so much appreciated in Great Britain. Bearing in mind, therefore, the great awakening of the conscience of this country in regard to the long and grievous misgovernment of Ireland, he felt it was only necessary for him now formally to make his present Motion to have it assented to by all parties. A measure of this kind has been before the House almost yearly for quite a number of years. Such a measure has even received the assent of this House. It would not be necessary for him to quote many statistics to prove the very great inequality of the municipal franchise between Ireland and Great Britain. He might mention, however, that in Ireland they now had only one burgess to 40 inhabitants, whereas in Great Britain they had one burgess to about every six of the population. For instance, the City of Dublin, having a population of 249,602, had only 6,644 burgesses on the roll; while Sheffield, with a population of 284,508, had 50,987 burgesses. Belfast, with a population of 208,122, had 6,051 burgesses on the roll, while Bristol, with a population of 206,874, had 27,723 burgesses on its roll. The City of Cork, with a population of 80,124, had only 2,059 burgesses; while Blackburn, with a population of 104,000, had 18,446 burgesses. A comparison of the numbers on the burgess rolls of the two countries would show that, while in Ireland the proportion of burgesses to population was one to 40, in England the proportion was one to six of its population. In fact, it was quite unnecessary to point out the inequalities in the municipal franchise between the two countries. When they had now a Parliamentary franchise being within one step of manhood suffrage it was unnecessary to expatiate on the absurdity of maintaining in Ireland, as the basis of the municipal franchise, a £10 rating, which was equivalent to about £15 rental. The Bill would assimilate the municipal franchise in the two countries. On a former occasion a like measure was objected to by a Belfast Representative on the ground that no extension of the franchise was desired there. It was easy to understand why the narrow-minded and illiberal oligarchy who, in Belfast, enjoy a monopoly of the municipal franchise, so close that the Catholics, though one-fourth of the population, have no representation on the Municipal Body; and, it is needless to say, Catholics dare not aspire to a share of the good things in the gift of the Corporation. But, so far from being an argument against extending the franchise, surely the existence of such a state of things in Belfast but points the moral. The hon. Member concluded by moving the second reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. James O'Brien.*)

MR. LEWIS (Londonderry) said, that, having regard to the thin attendance in the House, and especially in his own part of the House, it would be ridiculous then to expect a very exhaustive discussion, or an effective division on that Bill. But it was important that the facts should be known, and the reason for the substantial difference which undoubtedly existed in the state of the law as between England and Ireland in regard to the municipal franchise should be understood. It was quite true that the municipal franchise in Ireland and England was not the same, although the Parliamentary franchise was much the same. The old line had up to the present been maintained of having a £10 municipal franchise; and the reason of this was the extraordinary difference between the number of householders competent to obtain the franchise in Ireland and England. In Ireland he was sorry to say that there was extreme poverty, and amongst the lower classes there was an enormous number of persons who occupied dwellings of merely nominal value. He would not trouble the House with exact statistics to show that the municipal boroughs in Ireland contained large numbers of tenants of houses of £4 valuation and under £4. There was also an almost entire absence of the middle-class population to be found in England. It was, therefore, obvious that the result of the lowering of the franchise in Ireland would be to elevate to supreme power in the Municipalities in Ireland those who paid only a miserable modicum of the rates, or whose rates were paid for them by the landlords. If there were a larger number of Members present he would be in a better position to offer an effective opposition to the Bill, and the House would be surprised to find what would be the real effect of the measure as regards the very large number of voters which it would place upon the Register, and the very small amount of rates which they contributed. In municipal matters, where they were dealing with the expenditure of rates, he had never admitted that the present arrangement was satisfactory in England as to those who had the main burden of paying the rates; and still less would it be so in the case of Ireland, with the enormous mass of poverty-stricken occupiers in the large towns there, and with the absence also of the strong middle class which existed in England. The obvious effect of a measure like the present would therefore be to place the whole municipal power in the hands of persons who had no substantial pecuniary interest in the community. He believed that such a change would be made more fittingly when the Home Rule Bill was passed. He would quote a very pregnant sentence from a speech made by Earl Spencer at Newcastle in the presence of the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. John Morley), in which he stated that the condition was that—

> "Every Town Council, every Board of Guardians, and every Local Board outside Ulster was full of disloyalty to the Government."

He thought that this was a condition of affairs which was not very likely to be improved by the operation of this Bill. He did not, however, suppose that this was an argument which would have very much force with the Government or the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. John Morley), seeing the obvious manner in which he treated those Members sitting in the portion of the House where he (Mr. Lewis) sat. The manner of the right hon. Gentleman and the matter spoken by him afforded very pregnant evidence of the sympathy which lay between the right hon. Gentleman and hon. Members below the Gangway, and of his determination to do as much harm as he could to the loyal population which he (Mr. Lewis) had the honour to represent. He would mention, as a specimen, the extraordinary statement which the right hon. Gentleman made as to the uses of the Arms Act, than which nothing could more clearly show that all his sympathies were with hon. Gentlemen below the

Gangway. Anyone who had been present at Question time during the past three months, and who had noticed the manner as well as the nature of the right hon. Gentleman's answers, must have been driven to that conclusion. The Loyalist Members were quite aware of it. They knew that the forces which they had to contend against at the present time were not only enormous outside the House, but that the demonstrations of enmity inside the House which were made against them by a Representative of the Government were most painful to witness. [*Home Rule laughter.*] That might be a laughing matter to hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway; but to him and his Friends it was serious. As long as he had a seat in the House—and he had been four times returned by an Irish constituency—he should not hesitate to speak quite as plainly on Irish affairs as if he were an Irish-born Representative. The City of Derry, which had a population of 30,000, and which would be one of the Municipalities affected by the Bill, had never, so far as he knew, petitioned in favour of a reduction of the municipal franchise, because he believed they were perfectly satisfied. [*Home Rule cheers,* and "Oh!"] It was very easy for hon. Members below the Gangway to arrange their chorus of interruptions, and the Loyalist Members were perfectly accustomed to it; at any rate, he had been for six or seven years. He used to be frequently met with the jeering remark that the House would never see him back again, and, therefore, he need not be listened to. That assertion was often repeated with considerable vigour prior to the two last Elections, and he remembered that the hon. Member for Sligo (Mr. Sexton) used to be particularly emphatic on the point. Well, the Nationalist Party did their best at the last Election for Derry, and they sent the hon. Member for Sligo to contest the seat with him. The hon. Member did not like the look of it and went away, and then they sent a bigger apostle (Mr. Justin M'Carthy). The constituency had been made as democratic as the lowering of the franchise to almost manhood suffrage could make it; but the people of Derry were true to their old principles of loyalty and love of law and order, and so, very much to the surprise of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway he (Mr. Lewis) was again returned. [Mr. SEXTON: By 39 votes.] It was his duty to his constituency, who did not want this Bill, to ask the House to reject it; but he was placed in a difficulty by the absence of many of his hon. Friends, and therefore if he took a division by way of protest it would be in the hope of making more effective opposition at a future stage of the Bill.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The hon. Member who has just sat down appears to me to have travelled, in some of his observations, pretty wide of the mark. I hardly think that the hon. Member could be considered in Order when he thought fit to deal with a matter so insignificant as my sympathies and my way of dealing with Irish Questions in this House. But as he has done so, I may, perhaps, be allowed to say one word in self-defence. I have felt that I have not always been fortunate enough to win the approval of hon. Members opposite in my answers to Questions; but I have yet to learn that there is any justice in the charge that my manner towards Members sitting on the other side of the House has been otherwise than courteous, or such as they have a right to expect from a Minister of the Crown.

MR. LEWIS: I beg my right hon. Friend's pardon. I assure him that I had not the least idea of objecting to his manner towards us individually, but merely to his manner towards us as a Party.

MR. JOHN MORLEY: I am not a subtle enough metaphysician to distinguish between my manner towards hon. Members opposite as individuals, and towards them as a Party. If I have not been fortunate enough to secure the approval of hon. Members opposite, it is because the Questions have very often been ill-founded, and my answers to them have almost always consisted of the very driest statement of fact. As hon. Gentlemen must know, those answers are supplied to me by official authorities on the spot, who are entirely free from any sort of bias. I am glad of the opportunity of saying this, because charges have been brought against me of giving prejudiced answers. I observed that the charge was recently made at a meeting in Ulster; and I wish to say, as I should be ready to say to a larger House than this, that my answers to the Gentlemen who represent Ulster have been as considerate, as straightforward, and as inoffensive as my answers to any other Gentlemen. The hon. Gentleman regrets that he is not surrounded by more of his Friends, and he thinks that if he were so surrounded on the present occasion there would be a chance of more effective opposition. Well, there was a debate in 1882 on the second reading of a similar Bill, and on that occasion the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket) and the hon. Baronet who now represents Mid Armagh (Sir James Corry) declined to oppose the Bill. I am not sure, therefore, that if the hon. Member for Londonderry had more of his Friends here now, he would succeed in his opposition to the Bill any better than he is likely to do as it is. He has also changed his grounds. His arguments to-day are very different from the arguments he used in 1882. At that time the hon. Member said plainly what he has only stated obscurely to-day—namely, that he did not believe that Municipalities in England and Scotland had worked well, and that still less did he suppose they would work well in Ireland. If, however, the hon. Member thinks that he would get the Conservative Party to support him in the contention that popularly elected Municipal Bodies in England and Scotland are a failure, I very much doubt whether he would get the Leaders of the Conservative Party to support him in any such contention. So far as the Bill is concerned, the Government will offer no opposition to the second reading. The Conservative Members in the last Parliament did not oppose the second reading of the Bill; the Chief Secretary for Ireland, my late lamented Friend Mr. Forster, did not oppose it; and still less, therefore, is it likely that a Parliament elected on a broader franchise would oppose it. I confess that the arguments that weigh with me strongly in favour of the Bill are not the belief in popular representation merely, but the facts that were brought out by the inquiry into the state of the towns of Ireland last year. The Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes sat for a time in Ireland. In Waterford there is a population of 29,000, of whom 700 are on the municipal roll. What is the condition of Waterford? Its condition was described by several witnesses, and the evidence given to the Commission showed that its state is really and truly terrible. The overcrowding and all the other evils are really at their maximum, and as a result the death rate of Waterford is reported to be as high as 42 per 1,000. You may ask what connection that has with the municipal franchise. The witnesses examined, who were officials, were perfectly clear that the Councillors returned as at present on the restricted franchise represented either middlemen directly or the interests of middlemen. They admitted that the effect of the extension of the franchise in a town like Waterford would be to create a public opinion which would return members to the Council who would see that the law was administered, and its powers used in the interest of the population as a whole. I dare say that the hon. Member for Londonderry would tell us that a new Council, elected on a very wide suffrage, would play ducks and drakes with the money of the better class ratepayers. What I say is, that it would mean the improvement of the sanitary condition of towns like Waterford. The poorer ratepayers would compel the owners of property to do that which in England, at all events, we expect the owners of property to do, and systematically exact from them by law. That is the only illustration with which I will trouble the House, of the connection between an extension of the municipal franchise in Ireland and the improved condition of the towns of Ireland. I do not doubt that other illustrations might be given. This fact is very remarkable—that while the death rate of Ireland, as a whole, is lower than the death rate in England, the death rate in the towns of Ireland is very much higher than in the towns of England. I do not think it is a very speculative contention to suppose that very much of the bad sanitary condition of the towns of Ireland is due to the fact that so large a proportion of the population has little or no voice in the control of the Municipalities. I do not think at present, in view of the condition of the House, that I should be justified in dwelling at any length on the arguments put forward by the hon. Member opposite; and I will simply content myself, therefore, with saying that it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to support the second reading of the Bill.

SIR JAMES CORRY (Armagh, Mid) said, that the Chief Secretary for Ireland had referred to some remarks of his in a former debate; and in reference to those remarks he wished to state that, while he did not then oppose the second reading of the Bill, he could not help feeling that if the Irish municipal franchise were to be reduced without other steps being taken at the same time it would lead to many of the difficulties which the hon. Member for Derry had referred to. There could be no doubt, however, that if a measure of this kind were to be introduced by a responsible Government it might do good, because it would, in all probability, be founded upon the recommendations of the Select Committee which sat for a number of years on the subject, and of which the late Mr. Isaac Butt was a prominent Member. If this Bill dealt comprehensively with other matters with reference to municipal government as well as the extension of the franchise, he should have been prepared to assent to its principle. As the condition of the working classes had been referred to, he might say that the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes showed that the condition of the housing of the working classes in Belfast was better than even in any town in England or Scotland, and was very different indeed from the state of things in Dublin, Waterford, and elsewhere in Ireland. He did not intend to divide the House against the second reading of the Bill; but he hoped that if it went further the Government would make it a measure of their own, and introduce other matters into it besides the reduction of the franchise. He thought that the reduction of the franchise alone would be a very great calamity; and, therefore, although he did not oppose the second reading, he would take steps, if the Bill went further, with a view to the introduction into it of other matters for the benefit of the Municipal Corporations of Ireland.

MR. SEXTON (Sligo, S.) said, he observed that the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) had made a communication to the hon. Member behind him, indicating a desire that the opposition to the Bill should not be pushed any further. [Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: No.] Well, in making the observation he simply relied upon the evidence of his visual organs. He was, indeed, not surprised that the noble Lord should take that view, for seven or eight years ago it was on this very question of municipal franchise that the noble Lord showed that first insidious approach to Democratic principles for which he had since, in so many ways, become signalized. With reference to the observations of the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, the right hon. Gentleman need not have occupied a moment of his time in answering the uncalled for, and, he might add, the cowardly attack made upon him by the hon. Member for Londonderry City (Mr. Lewis). Undoubtedly the Chief Secretary, by the ability with which he had supported popular and just principles, and by his high character, enjoyed the respect of men of all opinions throughout the country; and he would venture to add that the Chief Secretary, in all his behaviour to the Members of that House, had displayed a strict and unvarying adherence to facts, and a high regard for the principles of Parliamentary intercourse, qualities for the lack of which the hon. Member for Londonderry had long been conspicuous. He thought it was very unfortunate for those who wished to maintain the existing system of corporate vote in Ireland that the defence of that system should have fallen to an Englishman, and, above all, to the particular Englishman who had spoken. He was sorry that the defence of the fortress should have fallen to the Member for that City, which, under the existing restricted franchise, returned men like him, who, as the hon. Member for North Armagh would say, "is in temporary retirement"—in penal servitude in fact. Yes; it was a Member of the Corporation of the City represented by even a pre-eminent member of that Corporation, who was sent to gaol for having set fire to his own house, and the police of Derry had now a list of probable aiders and abettors. Perhaps it would be too much to insinuate that any other members of that Corporation were guilty of like offences. That was the kind of Corporation in existence in that City represented by the hon. Member; and when the existing franchise resulted in sending to that Body men who were sentenced to penal servitude for the crime of arson, surely the hon. Member would admit any change would be for the better.

Mr. LEWIS: I beg the hon. Member's pardon. As a matter of fact the hon. Member is incorrect in saying that this took place in the present Corporation. It was a former Corporation; and I would remind the hon. Member of a similar case in the Dublin Corporation—the case of Mr. James Carey.

Mr. SEXTON: Well, Carey did not burn his house; and Carey was put into the Corporation by the political friends and supporters of the hon. Member for Derry City. His proposer and most of his assenting burgesses were Tories. He (Mr. Sexton) was not certain whether in the Derry case that gentleman was a member at the time he committed the crime; but he had been one, and was elected on the present franchise. He was glad to see the hon. Member for Mid Armagh (Sir James Corry) taking part in the discussion, for he doubtless understood the subject, and was qualified both as a baronet and an alderman——

Sir JAMES CORRY: I never was a member of the Corporation.

Mr. SEXTON: Well, there was a namesake of the hon. Gentleman a member. It would have been interesting to have heard a few remarks as to Belfast from the hon. Gentleman. Would the hon. Gentleman say that the sanitation in the districts for the working classes was anything like what it ought to be? He had had at best some experience of Belfast—he had spent some days there—and had no hesitation in declaring that the lighting, sewerage, and paving in the working classes' districts were a disgrace to civilization. It would have been interesting to have heard something about the fact that in a population of 250,000, with 70,000 Catholics, the Municipal Body would not admit one solitary member of that religion to their Board. It would be interesting to know why that was so—why not a single Catholic official was appointed, except, indeed, one solitary scavenger. It would have been interesting to learn how it happened that the Corporation of Belfast gave the then Town Clerk a higher salary than some Cabinet Ministers in England, £2,075 a-year. The hon. Member for Derry City insinuated that he (Mr. Sexton) had been a candidate for its representation. So far from that being the fact, he presided at the assemblage which selected his hon. Friend the Member for Longford, and he was not surprised that the latter was beaten, for he confined himself to expounding his views at public meetings. But the hon. Member for Derry City followed his inveterate custom of canvassing alone. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Yes; he began every morning before the rising of the sun, and did not conclude till the going down thereof. One of the only two arguments in his speech was founded on the assertion by the hon. Gentleman that Lord Spencer stated that the Irish Corporations were disloyal outside these two remarkable Bodies. [Mr. Lewis: Hear, hear!] Yes; the two exceptions were remarkable—one, a Corporation whose members were sent to penal servitude; and the other a Body that robbed the ratepayers to pay a Town Clerk a monstrous salary. But the hon. Member had given a free translation to Lord Spencer's words—a very free translation. If the hon. Member wished to be logical, he would remember that if the Irish Corporations were disloyal, they were disloyal on the present franchise. Could they, then, be any worse? What harm was there in extending the franchise if they had reached so low a point and were disloyal? To extend the franchise could not make them worse, whilst it might improve them. So the hon. Member's argument went for nothing. But that argument was, in effect, that the Corporations were disloyal and they must keep them so. He was not surprised that the hon. Member belonged to a Party or a political faction that always found exercise for his functions in promoting the provocation to disloyalty and disaffection amongst the Irish people. He well remembered that statement of Sydney Smith, who said—

> "The dissatisfaction of the Orangemen is the Irish rainbow, and when I see it in the sky I know that the storm is over."

The dissatisfaction of the hon. Gentleman was to him one of the most cheering signs in the horizon of Irish politics, for when the body of the Irish people began to be well affected towards the Government, and Members like the hon. Member for Derry City and his kind had to find fault with the discretion and good taste of Ministers of the Crown, then there was a chance for the peaceful and final settlement of the relations between Ireland and the Government. Another argument of the hon. Member was that the people contemplated to be enfranchised by this measure lived in houses of mere nominal value. The hon. Member should congratulate himself that circumstances happily enabled him to live in a house even of nominal value. Perhaps if the hon. Member had to depend for a living on his own intelligence and exertions, he would not have even so good a dwelling or be able to pay the rates. It was not because men were poor that they should not have a vote; indeed, such men had a better right to a voice in the matter than such men as the hon. Member, who, doubtless, lived in a palace. He congratulated the Tory Party on the stolid demeanour they had evinced during this discussion, and the noble Lord on the indication he had given of his opinion that the opposition to the Bill had better, perhaps, never have been raised.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.) said, that the hon. Member for Sligo was undoubtedly one of the ablest men of his Party and of the House of Commons; but he did not think that he was quite so influential as he supposed himself to be. The hon. Member for Sligo had asserted that he had intimated to the hon. Member for Londonderry that he did not intend to divide against the second reading of this Bill. [Mr. Sexton: I inferred it.] He could assure the hon. Member for Sligo that he had done nothing more than ask the hon. Member for Londonderry whether he did intend to divide the House upon the Motion, and that the hon. Member had replied in the affirmative; but no suggestion that he should not do so fell from him. He had been in favour of the lowering of the municipal franchise in Ireland ever since the year 1877, and he had supported it on the ground that he had supported many other Irish measures—namely, that a safe means of maintaining the Union in the two countries was the establishment of similar laws and similar institutions in both of them. It was all a matter of local government, and he still firmly believed that the best way of maintaining the Union would be by establishing similar institutions in Ireland to those they had in England and Scotland. If a division were taken he would have voted against this Bill, for the extremely good reason that he thought it perfectly absurd that the House of Commons should now be considering so small a matter when it was on the eve of considering so large a matter as the entire government of Ireland. If the principle of the Government with regard to their Irish policy was worth anything, it was obviously not worth while to divide on this question. In the language of the Prime Minister, they would be simply passing a law which would go to Ireland "in a foreign aspect and a foreign garb." The whole policy of the Government with regard to the future government of Ireland was that the House of Commons was not competent to deal with such peculiar matters as the municipal franchise. He (Lord Randolph Churchill) did not agree with that principle; but, at any rate, that was the principle now before the House, and that was the principle they were asked to act up to. He was quite surprised, therefore, to find the Chief Secretary for Ireland welcoming this Bill with so much warmth and cordiality, when he had declared over and over again that the House was not competent to deal with such a matter. This was not the time to bring forward such a Bill. If the Government of Ireland was to be given over to an entirely new Body, it was obvious that that was the Body that should deal with a question of this kind; but until that was settled he did not think that the House of Commons could consider such a Bill.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) said, they might have been prepared to learn that the noble Lord the Leader of the Tory Democracy was prepared to vote against a reduction of the municipal franchise if he had had the opportunity, and that he only regretted that the opportunity was not afforded to him. The reasons put forward by the noble Lord for the course he intended to take were on a level with the principles which had guided his action in another matter. He said that a larger measure being under the consideration of Parliament no small measure should be carried by the House. He should not be doing the noble Lord an injustice when he said that it was the boast of himself and those with whom he was connected that they would prevent the passage of the large measure. The noble Lord and his Friends were never tired of expressing their conviction that this larger measure should not pass, so that he was doing two things equally effective—he was keeping up an irritating inequality, and hindering the smallest step in municipal reform, whilst covering himself with the excuse that a larger measure was being considered. If the statements made by the noble Lord were accurate—and everything that the noble Lord stated was accurate, as he (Mr. Bradlaugh), from personal experience, had reason to know—there was no chance of the larger measure becoming law, and the noble Lord was simply using it as a cover to hinder this smaller concession; and he (Mr. Bradlaugh) hoped the second reading of the Bill would be agreed to.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

PROBATION OF FIRST OFFENDERS BILL.—[Bill 39.]

(*Mr. Howard Vincent, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Sir Algernon Borthwick, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Molloy.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I rise, Mr. Speaker, to move, with the permission of the House, the second reading of the Probation of First Offenders Bill. Its object is set forth somewhat more fully than usual in its Preamble. It will not, therefore, be necessary for me to detain the House with any lengthened explanation of the reasons which induced me to seek permission to introduce it. The support I have ground for hoping the measure may receive in several quarters of the House will afford evidence of the public good those experienced and hon. Members, whose names appear with mine upon the back, trust it may effect. Let me say, Sir, at the outset, that this Bill has not been framed in any spirit of sentimental philanthropy towards those who are guilty of criminal offences, and more especially towards hardened and habitual offenders. I hold a strong opinion with regard to them that such social pests are less burdensome to the public whilst in prison than at large. This Bill is designed solely to meet the case of those guilty of first offences of a minor character. There can be little doubt, Mr. Speaker, that many first offences are the result of inexperience, surprise, and extraordinary temptations, and various extenuating circumstances, rather than the product of a criminal and habitually vicious mind. Hon. Members who have had either judicial or magisterial experience will recall, I feel sure, to their minds many instances in which they have felt the difficulty of dealing properly with such cases. The public interest demanded that some punishment should be inflicted, and it has not been easy to pass any sentence sufficient to meet the case, and yet not of a character in its after effects, if not in its actual duration, to make the pursuit of an honest calling exceedingly difficult. I submit to the House that the object of legal punishment is fourfold—(1) the protection of society; (2) the deterring of others; (3) the expiation of the offence; (4) the reformation of the offender. The protection of society and the deterrent effect upon the public mind are best achieved, Mr. Speaker, by the certainty of detection. It is on this ground that I shall venture, so long as I have the honour of a seat in this House, to claim the generous consideration of hon. Members towards the police of the country, whose mission it is, by vigilance, to prevent crime being committed, and, by activity and ability, to detect its perpetrators. But the reformation of the offender is far from being the least important factor in the administration of the Criminal Law. I have the highest judicial authority for this, and I am not guilty, Mr. Speaker, of any breach of confidence if I mention that some of the most experienced opinions in the country are more than favourable to the principle of this Bill. There is nothing more difficult to wipe out than the taint of prison. It hangs like a millstone round the neck to the very edge of the grave. There is the difficulty of obtaining employment, the fear of recognition by prison companions, the terror of denunciation, and, not least of all, the moral contamination and degradation. An unbroken career of crime, a constant battle with society, ending in a long sentence of penal servitude, thus but too often succeeds the few weeks' or months' imprisonment given for a trivial first offence. In Boston, Massachusetts, a system of probation was instituted in 1878 in order to meet this evil, and the complete success which has attended its operations has led me to take the earliest opportunity of bringing the matter before the House of Commons. The results of the first five years' work are so remarkable that I shall make no apology for reading to the House an extract from the official Report—

> "In reviewing the records of the five years' work of probation, we are met first by the discouraging fact that 223 persons threw away the opportunity offered them to reform without punishment, and had been surrendered and sent to prison, and that 44 others of the same character had absconded to escape punishment. We must also add to these 107 who did well while on probation, but had since been convicted of some offence. We therefore have a total of 374 persons to count as lost. But when we examine further, and find that this loss amounts to less than 15 per cent, and that 2,187 persons, or more than 85 per cent, so conducted themselves while on probation as to merit the approval of the Court before which they were convicted, and have since led respectable lives, there would seem to be substantial reasons for encouragement. The probation system saved the State in Suffolk County, Massachusetts, in five years, more than 82,000 dollars in prison expenses, and a large sum, also, by the recoupment of the costs of prosecution. But," ends the Report, "who can estimate the value of a change from a course of vice and crime to one of rectitude and usefulness in hundreds of lives, or the value of cheerless homes made peaceful and happy."

The House will thus recognize, Mr. Speaker, that the good to be effected by the enactment of this measure does not rest merely upon sanguine, theoretical speculation. The principle has been well tried under a judicial system similar to our own, founded by common ancestors; and propositions, too, for its adoption in other territories occupied by the Anglo-Saxon race are, I am happy, Sir, to know, now before more than one Colonial Legislature. The Bill does not, in point of fact, introduce any new feature into our criminal jurisprudence; it simply recognizes and extends the practice sometimes resorted to of discharging first and youthful offenders in trivial cases without imprisonment. The present practice of releasing upon recognizances, to come up for judgment when called upon, is not extensively resorted to, because it errs rather on the side of excessive leniency. All further knowledge of the prisoner is lost to the public authorities; he has no great incentive to reform; and there are no means of bringing him up for judgment if his conduct is unsatisfactory. The House will observe that the Bill is limited in its operation to offences for which imprisonment may be inflicted in contradistinction to penal servitude, which is the penalty attaching to all serious crimes. I may also point out that as two years is the maximum legal duration of imprisonment, that is also the maximum period of probation under the Bill. The conditions of probation in Massachusetts are analogous to those attaching to police supervision in this country under the Prevention of Crime Acts, and neither there nor here do they press in any way harshly upon the persons subjected to them. These conditions are, briefly—that a supervisee or probationer shall report himself once a month, either personally or in writing, sleep at a declared address, get his living by honest means, and not move out of one district or into another without giving notice. These conditions, while enabling the Police Authorities to exercise sufficient surveillance, give them very little trouble, spread over a large area as the duty is. Under the same conditions, liberty is accorded to persons sentenced to penal servitude before the full expiration of their sentences, and nothing has contributed more to the admirable discipline maintained in convict establishments in Great Britain. Persons may also be subjected to them, under 34 & 35 *Vict.* c. 112, s. 18, who have been guilty of certain offences; and while the conditions in no way oppress the honestly disposed, and may be relaxed under special circumstances, they act as a great deterrent against crime, and as a great incentive to keep straight, for a breach of any one of the conditions entails 12 months' imprisonment with hard labour. This would be the liability also with the probationers under the Bill; and as they would not be given the benefit of its provisions in any serious case, sufficient punishment would be held in reserve over them, and without the expense or trouble of re-trial if their conduct was unsatisfactory. There may be some few persons, and possibly some hon. Members, who have conceived a prejudice against police supervision, arising from the unfounded complaints of a few worthless men that it had hindered them from obtaining honest employment. I can assure the House, however, from an experience of more than six years as Director of Criminal Investigations, during the whole of which time I had many hundreds of convicts on licence and police supervisees under my control, that such an opinion is far from justified by facts. I do not say that a policeman had never been guilty of an excess of zeal; but during the period of my connection with the Metropolitan Police no charge of undue interference against this class of persons was ever substantiated against them. Nor am I travelling beyond the facts when I say the honourable attitude of the police throughout the country towards the class of persons in question is gratefully recognized by the various excellent Associations existing for the assistance of discharged prisoners. I venture, Mr. Speaker, to claim for this Bill that it will, if enacted—(1) recoup to the public the expenses of many prosecutions; (2) save the people the expense of maintaining many hundreds of persons in prison; (3) hinder the manufacture of habitual criminals; (4) gain to the State many honest citizens, by establishing powerful incentives to reform, and giving first offenders the hope of leading useful lives, without absolving them from the consequence of crime, or diminishing the safeguards demanded by social order. On all these grounds then, Sir, I beg very earnestly to commend the Bill to the consideration of the House and of Her Majesty's Government, and to move that it be now read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Howard Vincent.*)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.) said, he had listened with great interest to the speech of the hon. Gentleman. He had brought forward many reasons which ought to weigh with those who had to consider this Bill; and he would promise the hon. Gentleman that they should have the fullest consideration from the Government. But he would remind the House that the hon. Gentleman had brought in the Bill on the 21st of January, but did not circulate it until Monday last; and, therefore, he (Mr. Childers) had practically only had 36 hours in which to consider the proposal and take advice upon the subject. He need not tell the House that upon a question of this kind, which made a very enormous change in the Criminal Law so far as it affected punishment, was one upon which he could not venture to make any recommendations without not only full consideration, but without consulting those, whether Judges or magistrates, who had to administer the police law, as well as to the police authorities themselves. In the time since the circulation of the Bill it had been absolutely out of his power to do a tithe of what it would be necessary for him to do in this matter. He had, however, gone as far as he could, and even in this short time the conflicting opinions he had received were such as to satisfy him that it was a difficult subject to deal with. The change made was practically this—that it should be in the power of a Court in future, in the case of an offence that might be punished with imprisonment, to put the offender under the system of police surveillance. That, as the House would see, was a very momentous and serious change. He said nothing against it, but it would be his duty to study it most carefully; and he would, therefore, appeal to the hon. Gentleman, after the speech he had made, to allow the debate on the second reading of the Bill to be adjourned for three weeks or so, in order to enable him to obtain the necessary advice upon the subject.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT said, that as the right hon. Gentleman desired it, he had no alternative but to postpone the second reading until the 20th instant. He had, however, hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would have consented to the second reading that day, when the Committee stage could be taken at the right hon. Gentleman's convenience.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present: House counted, and 40 Members being found present.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr) said, he would appeal to the Home Secretary to allow the present stage of the Bill to be taken, on the understanding that the Committee stage should be postponed for three weeks.

MR. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne), in supporting the Bill, said, he would appeal to the Home Secretary to allow it to be read a second time. There were many cases, particularly as to young domestic servants, prosecuted for some trifling theft, where offenders were degraded and ruined by being sent to prison.

Mr. HASTINGS (Worcestershire, E.) said, he thought the Bill would make a very salutary change, a change, however, which was not so large as the Home Secretary seemed to suppose. As the law stood at present it was quite possible for a Judge of Assize, or Chairman of Quarter Sessions, to pass a sentence of a day's imprisonment, which meant immediate discharge from the dock, and to follow this by police supervision. The change, therefore, only amounted to this—that it gave Judges and Chairmen power to do for a first offence what they could now do for a second. With considerable experience, he was of opinion that it was of great importance that a prisoner, though guilty, should not be sent to prison in certain cases for a first offence, but should be subjected to a term of police supervision. In his own county—Worcestershire—the police had admirably carried out their duties of supervision, and he did not remember one case of hardship or oppression. If this additional duty was imposed upon them he believed the police would discharge it in a kindly spirit. The Bill, no doubt, proposed an innovation; but he believed it was in the right direction.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) said, he was in favour of the principle of the Bill.

Debate *adjourned* till *Wednesday* 26th May.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—ORDERS OF THE DAY FOR SECOND READING —POSTPONEMENT OF UNPRINTED BILLS.—OBSERVATIONS.

The SECRETARY to the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. C. T. D. Acland) (Cornwall, Launceston) said, he wished to call attention to the fact that there were four out of the first six Bills that had been put down in a prominent position among the Orders, of which none had been printed. He wished to emphasize the exceeding inconvenience of that practice, because it necessitated the presence of Ministers who were responsible for the conduct of Government Bills, and who must be early in their places to see that such Bills were not moved by any other Member present. In the case of the last—the Merchandise Marks Act (1882) Amendment Bill—the hon. Member in charge of it was aware that the Government were preparing a Bill which would cover all the points which his Bill dealt with.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.) said, that he must remind the Home Secretary of his attitude upon this question on a recent occasion. He was astonished that the right hon. Gentleman should have allowed the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Acland) to make the remarks he had made. He entirely agreed with the remarks of the hon. Gentleman; but it would be in the Home Secretary's recollection that some four or five weeks ago he (Lord Randolph Churchill) appealed to the House to put a stop to the practice of obtaining leave to bring in Bills and Members not troubling to have them printed and circulated. He, at that time, appealed to the House to take some strong action in the matter, in order to avoid the recurrence of the inconvenience, and the Home Secretary got up and pointedly disagreed with him, although the general feeling of the House was undoubtedly in his favour; so that if the scandal had reached so great a height that four Bills had been put down, none of which had been printed and circulated, the blame lay with the Government, and principally with the Home Secretary.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.) said, that the noble Lord was quite mistaken in making this attack upon him. The noble Lord attacked him as if he was a schoolmaster, and as if he was to tell his hon. Friend (Mr. Acland) whether he might or might not make a speech in which the noble Lord agreed. That was absurd. The noble Lord was entirely mistaken. He had always held the same doctrine as his hon. Friend. He made no such remarks as the noble Lord had attributed to him. He was not even in the House on the occasion.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I beg your pardon. My recollection is perfectly distinct on the point.

Mr. CHILDERS: Then the noble Lord's recollection is quite in error. I could not have said that which I have always resisted to the utmost on half-a-dozen occasions.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL said, that on the question of fact he must appeal to the Speaker, because the action he took would be in the recollection of that right hon. Gentleman. He (Lord Randolph Churchill) suggested to an hon. Member below the Gangway that the Order should be read and discharged on a particular Bill, on the ground that the Bill had not been printed. It would be in the recollection of the Speaker and the House that the Home Secretary disagreed with his remarks.

MR. CHILDERS: That is a totally different matter.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: You said you were not there.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

MR. CHILDERS said, that he hoped he might be allowed to say, in explanation, that he did not agree with the proposal of the noble Lord that the Order should be discharged. That was a totally different question. It was in accordance with the Rules of the House that, under the circumstances of the particular case, the Order should be discharged. He believed it was sound doctrine that merely because a Bill was not printed was no ground for discharging the Order. But that was not the point of objection of his hon. Friend (Mr. Acland).

MR. SPEAKER said, that perhaps he ought to say that the noble Lord was perfectly correct in this respect—that a reference was made to him (Mr. Speaker) on a question as to whether a certain Bill should be put off to that distant date. He then stated, from the Chair, that it was unusual and highly inconvenient that, in the absence of the hon. Gentleman who was in charge of the Bill, it should be so put off; because the hon. Gentleman might come down some time later, and find that the Bill had been discharged in his absence. On the present occasion a Bill had been put off; but only on the authority of an hon. Gentleman acting on behalf of the hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACT (1884) EXTENSION BILL.

(*Sir Robert Fowler, Mr. Lionel Cohen, Mr. Hunt, Sir Roper Lethbridge.*)

[BILL 25.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that its object was to remove doubts which had arisen in the interpretation of the Act of 1884. The decision of the Courts had been that an *employé* occupying a separate bedroom could vote at an election, while an *employé* not occupying a separate bedroom might not do so. The result of that decision was that in the case of *employés* in large establishments not occupying a separate bedroom they were not at present enfranchised. The defect in the law had arisen without any intention on the part of either side, and he had brought in this Bill in order to remedy it.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir Robert Fowler.*)

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan) said, he hoped the hon. Gentleman (Sir Robert Fowler) would adopt words in Committee which would make unnecessary any appeal to the Courts of Law to decide that only men were included in the provisions of the Act. He had himself raised the same question when the Representation of the People Bill, 1867, was before the House; and it was only after a lengthened argument that the Judges decided that women were not enfranchised by that Act. The question of woman suffrage must be decided apart from the Bill, and on the general principle. What he desired, he would suggest, could easily be effected by adopting in the Bill the same language as was found in the Act of 1867, and also in the Act of 1885, so as to prevent any doubt arising that the word "man" did not also include "woman."

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) said, he truly believed that the hon. Baronet (Sir Robert Fowler) wished to extend the franchise as far as he could, and did not merely desire to extend it so as to help his own Party without reference to others. He would, therefore, appeal to the hon. Baronet, as another Bill was on the Paper, and would shortly be reached (The Parliamentary Franchise Bill), to terminate the discussion on this Bill, and then they could co-operate together to support this other measure, which was a real measure of enfranchisement.

MR. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge) said, he would also recommend the hon. Baronet, for the same reason as that stated by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh), to withdraw the second reading of the Bill for the present, as a more comprehensive measure was on the Orders of the Day, and would soon be reached.

Mr. LEWIS (Londonderry) asked, why a disability should be sought to be got rid of with reference to one class of persons, and not with reference to another? This Bill was to relieve the deserving class of shopmen and warehousemen in large towns; but it seemed to him that they could not enter into the consideration of whether certain classes were more worthy than others who were excluded. Instead of the House passing a fragmentary Bill like this, and then considering another which proposed to carry these changes to a logical conclusion, it ought to leave the matter to be taken in hand by the Government, so that it might determine the extent to which the enlargement of the Franchise Act was to be carried. The proper course would be to adjourn the debate, so that the Government might have an opportunity to make up its mind as to what it was desirable to do.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.) said, that if he had spoken earlier he should have appealed to his hon. Friend not to press the Bill at the present time, but to allow the Order to be discharged or adjourned for two months, as he (Mr. Childers) had already stated, in answer to a Question, that the Government considered it would be wise and necessary to introduce during the present Session a Bill to deal with the question of registration, and particularly with questions of borough representation. He had also stated on a former occasion that it was not wise to tinker with the Representation of the People Bill and the other Acts which were incorporated with it. There were, no doubt, weak points in the Act that had been brought out in the Registration Courts, and it would be desirable in due time to deal with them; but he doubted whether it would be possible to do it that Session. He should deprecate dealing with these matters in a piecemeal way as it was proposed to do, for there were many points which the present Bill did not deal with at all. It dealt with a fringe only of the subject, and left many important points untouched. He would, therefore, very much prefer taking up the whole question in a Government measure. The Government, therefore, this Session would introduce the Bill in reference to registration which they were already pledged to introduce. The other Bill, dealing with the intricate question of the franchise, would be dealt with next Session, as there was not time to deal with it in this. It would be better to discharge the Order relating to this Bill; but if the hon. Member preferred it the debate might be adjourned for two months.

Sir ROBERT FOWLER asked if it was to be understood that the Government would introduce next Session a Bill dealing with the whole question?

Mr. CHILDERS said, yes; that next Session they would deal with the whole question of the franchise.

Sir ROBERT FOWLER said, that after what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman he would ask leave to adjourn the debate for two months.

Debate *adjourned* till *Wednesday* 7th July.

MARRIED WOMEN (MAINTENANCE IN CASE OF DESERTION) BILL.

(*Mr. Pulley, Mr. Thomas Blake, Mr. Winterbotham, Mr. Warmington.*)

[BILL 111.] SECOND READING.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [24th March], "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Pulley.*)

Question again proposed.

Debate *resumed.*

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Charles Russell) (Hackney, S.) said, that the main scope and object of the Bill was to give to any two justices or a single stipendiary magistrate the power of pronouncing decrees of judicial separation if it was shown that a wife had been deserted by her husband. Such a Bill would be viewed differently by those who took different views as to the desirability of granting facilities to sever the matrimonial tie; and beyond that there was the question of granting the power proposed to such a tribunal. He did not say that it might not be necessary to grant to poor persons greater facilities for availing themselves of the law; but this Bill would enable the magistrates empowered to do so—and he desired to speak of them with all respect

—however unlearned in the law they might be, to pronounce the decree, without the husband being convicted of desertion, and merely upon proof being given that he had deserted his wife. The law had already taken one very important step in the way of giving power to magistrates. Under the Matrimonial Causes Act, in case a husband was convicted of aggravated assault, if it was shown that the woman was in actual peril, the magistrates might pronounce a decree of judicial separation. But this Bill appeared to open a wide door to collusion between man and wife, who might agree to leave each other, and then allege that there had been desertion; and no remedy was left in case it should thereafter be found that there had been collusion. The 2nd clause of the Bill gave an extraordinary power — a power which he was not aware was given to any other tribunal. It enabled an application to be made, a summons to be granted, and an order made, although the husband had never been served with notice at all. He would admit that the present law was cumbrous in the case of desertion, because the wife must either go to the Poor Law Guardians, get assistance, and put them in motion, or go and live with some relation, who would supply her with necessaries, and in that indirect way raise an action against the husband. Some shorter and more direct remedy was required, and he hoped it might have been possible to evolve out of this Bill a reasonable proposition to meet the grievance he had stated; but he was afraid it did not afford the means of providing a remedy. He could not agree to the provisions of the Bill as it stood.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton), in supporting the Bill, said, that the objections of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General referred to details which could very well be considered in Committee. The principle of the Bill was that of securing maintenance to married women who had been deserted by their husbands, and to secure for them the equivalent of a decree of judicial separation. It was impossible that poor women could employ solicitors, so as to avail themselves of the remedies now provided. It was easy to make this Bill say that the husband should have been convicted of desertion; and in cases of divorce substituted service of a summons was already known.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.) said, that this law, for anything that appeared in it, would apparently apply to Scotland; and he wished to say that he shared the opinion of his hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General. He thought the power given in the Bill was a very dangerous one to confer upon persons with slight skill in administrating such a very delicate jurisdiction. It would be dangerous to give the proposed jurisdiction to even stipendiary magistrates, who were supposed to be appointed for their knowledge of the Criminal Law. There could be no greater evil to society than that these orders should be made matters of course, and granted without the gravest consideration and fullest appreciation of the evils they were likely to carry in their train. He should suggest that, if the Bill was to become law now, when they had the Married Women's Property Act there should be some provision for husbands deserted by their wives. The provision of the Bill relating to the custody of children was already met adequately by the Infants Bill.

MR. SPICER (Islington, S.) said, there was no doubt that the Bill would meet a large number of cases of desertion, and in that way would remedy hardships that occurred in the case of many poor women; and, after all, the objections to the Bill were not so serious as they had been made to appear. The only order that could be made was one for the payment of a certain sum by the husband, and that order could be varied upon the application of either the husband or the wife to a Court of Law. Some such measure would, he felt certain, act as a restriction on the desertion of wives.

MR. W. F. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby) said, he deeply regretted that the Government were opposing the Bill. He remembered a case where a man, earning £200 or £300 a-year, owing to drink became entirely unable to earn anything; and the only way in which his wife was able to obtain relief was by taking one of the roundabout courses referred to by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General, and going to the workhouse. He thought it would be better to let the Bill go into Committee, to see whether some better means than those which existed could not be found for dealing with such a difficult question. He thought it very hard that a woman deserted by her husband should have no other means of obtaining relief from him except by going into the workhouse.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.) said, he believed that the House would be reluctant to give to magistrates the power of granting judicial separation, although it would probably be willing to see an improvement of the machinery by which a wife might obtain a subsistence. The Government would object to any provisions of the Bill except those which, in their opinion, had been shown to be, and were admitted to be, necessary; but they did not oppose the second reading. He hoped that the Committee stage would be put off to such a time as would enable the Government to bring up Amendments for consideration.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Wednesday* 19th May.

QUARRY (FENCING) BILL.—[BILL 185.]

(*Mr. Thomas Blake, Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Burt, Mr. Cobb, Mr. Abraham.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. T. BLAKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that its object was to preserve life, and to prevent accidents in the working of quarries, by compelling sufficient safeguards to be taken, as in the case of mines.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. T. Blake.*)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.) said, it was the intention of the Government to introduce a more comprehensive measure which would embrace this subject; and, under these circumstances, he trusted that the hon. Member would not press the Bill.

MR. T. BLAKE said, he was perfectly satisfied with the assurance of the right hon. Gentleman, and would withdraw the Bill.

Mr. W. F. Lawrence

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Bill *withdrawn.*

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

(*Sir Joseph Pease, Mr. Palmer, Sir Isaac Wilson.*)

[BILL 27.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*Sir Joseph Pease.*)

MR. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne), in rising to move, as an Amendment—

> "That it be an Instruction to the said Committee that they have power to extend the provisions of the said Bill to all houses, shops, and buildings, or any part thereof, occupied or used by any club, society, or association in which intoxicating liquors are sold or supplied to the members of the said club, society, or association, for consumption in the said house, or shop, or building, or any part thereof,"

said, he wished to know what was the principle which the House had given its assent to when it agreed to the second reading of the Bill? Was it that drinking on Sundays was a wrong in itself, or that the meeting together for conversation and social enjoyment in public-houses was idle and frivolous waste of time, and also a wrong thing? He hardly knew on what other principle the entire closing of public-houses on Sundays could be affirmed. If the object of the Bill was to prevent people from spending their time in idle gossip, and from drinking on Sundays, that object was in no way carried out by the Bill as it stood. The Bill, in its present shape, referred to nothing but public-houses, and these places formed but a very small proportion of the agencies by which drink was distributed on Sundays, and only a very small part of the means by which people assembled to waste their time on that day. There was no doubt that if this Bill passed in its present shape it would lead to an enormous increase in the number of what were called drinking clubs. It was notorious that the effect of closing public-houses in Cardiff had been to extend and increase to an enormous extent these drinking places; and he was told that an active member of the temperance organization there had deplored that he was ever a party to closing public-houses on Sunday, having become convinced that it had been the means of greatly increasing drinking on that day. If they were to affirm the principle that drinking and meeting together for social converse was wrong, then they ought to affirm it honestly all round and impartially, and especially to affirm it where it would touch themselves, because if they were to put an end to the compromise by which public-houses were allowed to be open at particular hours on Sunday, they might be preventing other people from doing that which at present they could do themselves. The answer to that would be that a club was nothing more than a private house, in which people collected to talk and drink, if they pleased, as in their own house. He was astonished that in these days, when so many legal fictions were being abandoned, such threadbare and flimsy pretexts should exist at all. A club was no more a private house than a public-house, and the only difference between it and a licensed public-house was that the consumption must be upon the premises, and that there must be some sort of subscription and membership. But the subscription might be only half-a-crown, and there might be 500 members. He was told that there were many such clubs in a large district in the neighbourhood of Leeds; and if there were generous rules for the admission of strangers by members, no one could help imagining that more grievous public-houses did not exist, and that these clubs encouraged the evils attributed to public-houses to a larger degree. He had heard of these drinking clubs held at places with a rental of 1*s.* 6*d.* per week, and in all these places drinking took place from morning to night. An hon. Member had told him that publicans were greatly in favour of the Bill, because if it passed as it stood they thought they could turn their houses into clubs, and so get rid of police control and the rates and taxes they now had to pay. It was notorious that drinking clubs prevailed in some Lancashire towns, and he only avoided giving particulars because he did not like to single out particular places and clubs. He had, however, a list of them and their members, which he believed would astonish some hon. Gentlemen. Now, such legislation as that went beyond the spirit of fair compromise, and would give rise to far greater evils than any that at present existed. If idleness and drinking were to be discouraged on Sundays, what, he would ask, could be easier than the simple alteration he suggested—namely, to provide that the word "premises" should be taken to mean—

> "Any place or building occupied or used by any club, society, or association in which intoxicating liquors are sold or supplied to the members."

What could be fairer than that? If they did not pass the Instruction, they would be open to the charge that they were content to place burdens upon others which they objected to bear themselves. Every hon. Member ought to be anxious to get rid of an imputation of that kind. He trusted that hon. Members who had shown so much courage in extending to humble people that most useful law, that they should stay at home on Sundays and not drink at public-houses, would with equal courage apply the principle to themselves, and prohibit unlicensed as well licensed houses from opening on Sunday. By passing the Instruction they would show their desire for really effective legislation, and get rid of the reproach that they made one law for the poor and another for the rich. No doubt hon. Members on his side of the House would be glad to carry his proposition into effect, and, if necessary, to shut up the Carlton Club on Sundays. Thus, by abstaining from going to their clubs, in which they now, perhaps, were wicked enough to indulge in social converse, and even in political discussion, on Sundays, they would set a good example to the humbler classes for whom it was proposed to legislate by this Bill.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE (Worcester, Evesham) seconded the Amendment.

Motion made and Question proposed,

> "That it be an Instruction to the said Committee that they have power to extend the provisions of the said Bill to all houses, shops, and buildings, or any part thereof, occupied or used by any club, society, or association in which intoxicating liquors are sold or supplied to the members of the said club, society, or association for consumption in the said house, or shop, or building, or any part thereof."—(*Mr. Addison.*)

SIR JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle) said, if the House would allow the Bill to go into Committee that day he would undertake to move immediately to report Progress, as he did not see in their places one or two of his hon. Friends who usually sat opposite, and who had put down Notices of Amendments. He believed the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. Addison) was perfectly correct in moving the Instruction. He (Sir Joseph Pease) could not attempt to vie with the hon. and learned Gentleman in regard to technical knowledge of the Forms of the House; but he believed the Instruction of the hon. and learned Gentleman was so entirely outside the scope of the Bill that he would not, under the Rules and Orders of the House, have been able to move it in Committee on the Bill, though he was quite at liberty to move it on the Motion to go into Committee. He could not, however, help thinking there was a great absence of logic in the Motion of his hon. and learned Friend. By the Bill he (Sir Joseph Pease) did not intend to deal with the privileges of either the rich or the poor in regard to clubs. He had left the rich man his club, and he had left the poor man his club; and when the hon. and learned Gentleman called the attention of the House to the position of things in Wales, he (Sir Joseph Pease) must remind him that the great difference between that Bill and the Welsh Sunday Closing Act was that this Bill allowed the poor man to go into the public-house for two hours during the Sunday afternoon, and two hours during the Sunday evening, in order that he might procure for home consumption his dinner and supper beer. He (Sir Joseph Pease) had never said that the Sunday drinking of a glass of beer was wrong, or that Sunday conversation was wrong. All those things were conjured out of his hon. and learned Friend's own consciousness. If he accepted the Motion he should go far beyond the scope of the Bill, and beyond that which he believed to be absolutely necessary. He had made careful inquiries, so far as his own district was concerned, and he could, without hesitation, say that there was no working men's club in Durham or in the North Riding of Yorkshire in which intoxicating liquors were sold on Sunday. Taking it as a whole, he objected to the Instruction to the Committee as entirely outside the scope of the Bill. If the poor man thought he was robbed in any way of his rights in regard to his frequenting the public-house, the Bill would allow him to go to his club; and he had sufficient faith in the working men of the country to believe that if they did think it necessary, in consequence of the passing of the Bill, to establish clubs, they would be found to drink in moderation. He trusted that his hon. and learned Friend would be content with the speech he had made. He (Sir Joseph Pease) would assure the House that he had no wish to interfere with the reasonable facilities of the people to obtain liquor on the Sunday. He hoped the House would support him in resisting this Instruction.

Colonel HUGHES (Woolwich) said, he earnestly protested against the Bill, the object of which was to further restrict a particular and respectable trade, without, in the least, checking the evils of intemperance in other respects, which it left altogether untouched. For instance, the Bill did nothing to stop drinking on steamboats, or to regulate the hours of sale on board. The whole object seemed to be to put further restrictions on a licensed trade, and to drive people to drinking clubs, which were open during the time of Divine Service, and were frequented by hundreds of women as well as men. It was a grievance that while the Temperance Party were endeavouring in one direction to stop what they considered a small evil, they were actually encouraging by their silence, or want of legislation, a very much larger evil, which was gradually springing up in all the great towns.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Main Question, put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause (Hours of closing on Sunday).

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Sir Joseph Pease,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Friday* 7th June.

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE BILL.

[Bill 124.]

(*Mr. Moulton, Mr. A. Acland, Mr. Dillwyn.*)

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [2nd April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Debate *resumed.*

MR. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge) said, that as he did not see the hon. Gentleman who had charge of the Bill, or any of the hon. Members whose names appeared on the back of the Bill in their places, he begged to move the second reading.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle) asked, if it was competent for the hon. Gentleman to move the second reading of the Bill?

MR. SPEAKER said, that the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Everett) was perfectly in Order. The Bill was now the property of the House, and any hon. Gentleman was at liberty to move it.

MR. EVERETT, resuming, said, he was anxious that the Bill should proceed, because it affirmed a very important principle, or, at any rate, went a long way towards affirming an important principle—that of manhood suffrage. He was confident that every hon. Member who, like himself, carefully watched the progress of the County Franchise Bill, must have come to the conclusion that the only intelligible foundation on which they could stand in regard to suffrage was that of manhood suffrage. There was no qualification possessed by a man so high as that of manhood; and on that ground he thought that the sooner they incorporated in their legislation the principle of one man one vote, the sooner they would arrive at the goal which everybody admitted to be most desirable. It might be feared that property would be endangered if power were put in the hands of men without any regard as to whether they possessed property or not. If there was a wish on the part of the poor men to rob the rich men of their possessions, he knew of nothing to prevent them doing so now. They had the advantage of numbers, and the property of the rich was distinctly within their power; but he was glad to think that there was the same honest principle abiding in the poor man's mind as in the rich man's mind. He had pleasure in moving the second reading of the Bill, because it contained provisions for removing many of the difficulties now connected with registration. Everyone who had had to do with registration was aware how greatly it was complicated by the great variety of suffrages now in existence. This Bill would sweep away all suffrages except one—namely, that of manhood; and it would, therefore, make the work of registration infinitely more simple than it was now. Having said this much in favour of the principle of the Bill, he wished to add that he had no desire, against the will of the House, to persevere with the second reading, if he was to understand that Her Majesty's Government intended to deal with registration this year, and with the suffrage question next year. He trusted that the Government would see their way to adopt, in regard to the suffrage, the only final and intelligible resting place—namely, that of manhood suffrage. They would thus sweep away all registration difficulties, and stand upon the ground which was most conducive to the highest and best interests of the country in which they lived.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Everett.*)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.) said, that the hon. Member (Mr. Everett) had probably not heard the discussion which took place on the Franchise Bill in charge of the hon. Member for the City of London (Sir Robert Fowler). He (Mr. Childers) then explained that Her Majesty's Government intended to bring in a Bill on the subject of registration, though they did not propose to deal with the franchise during the present Session. This Bill went much further than the Bill of the hon. Member for the City of London, and practically gave the franchise to everyone who lived in the same house during the month of June, provided he had possessed the electoral *status* for six months. He would, however, express no opinion upon it; but would only ask that it should be adjourned to the same date as that to which the other Bill was adjourned, and for that purpose he would make the requisite Motion.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be further adjourned till Wednesday 7th July,"—(*Mr. Secretary Childers,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

SUPPLY.—REPORT.

Resolutions [3rd May] *reported.*

First Twenty-four Resolutions *agreed to.*

Twenty-fifth Resolution *postponed*.

Subsequent Resolutions *agreed to*.

Postponed Resolution to be considered *To-morrow*.

MOTIONS.

JURORS' DETENTION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Lockwood, Bill to amend the Law relating to the detention of Juries during the trial of felonies, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Lockwood, Mr. Crompton, Mr. Finlay, and Mr. Baggallay.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 202.]

MINING LEASES (CORNWALL AND DEVON) BILL.

On Motion of Sir John St. Aubyn, Bill to facilitate the grant and renewal of leases to Metalliferous Mines, and for other purposes within the Stannaries of Cornwall and Devon, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir John St. Aubyn, Mr. Courtney, Viscount Ebrington, Mr. Beckford Smith, and Mr. Seale-Hayne.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 204.]

STANNARIES ACT (1869) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir John St. Aubyn, Bill to amend "The Stannaries Act, 1869," and for other purposes relating thereto, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir John St. Aubyn, Mr. Courtney, Viscount Ebrington, Mr. Beckford Smith, and Mr. Seale-Hayne.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 203.]

House adjourned at a quarter before Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 6th *May*, 1886.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2)* (84); Infants * (86); Metropolitan Police Stations * (87); Hyde Park Corner (New Streets) * (88).

Second Reading—Drowned Persons (Discovery and Interment) (77).

THE LATE EARL OF REDESDALE (CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEES OF THIS HOUSE).

OBITUARY NOTICE.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Earl GRANVILLE): Your Lordships will bear with me while I say a few words respecting the loss which we have sustained during the Recess. Lord Redesdale has passed away in a ripe and honoured old age. He sat in this House 56 years; I believe that he, with another of the most respected Members of this Assembly, Lord Chichester, was the last who sat here during the Reign of George IV. Lord Redesdale was one of my oldest personal friends, and I am one of now a small number who saw him unanimously chosen as the Chairman of your Lordships' Committees, an Office the duties of which he has discharged for 35 years with distinction, judgment, and decision, and in a manner most advantageous to your Lordships' House and to the public. Lord Redesdale was a keen politician; he at one time held a confidential Office in this Assembly, to which no strictly official title belongs, but which implies the full confidence of the Leaders of a Party in the Peer who holds it. He resigned this post in consequence of the repeal of the Corn Laws under the Government of Sir Robert Peel. It is, perhaps, odd for me to say so, but I could not help feeling strong admiration for the genuine Conservatism with which Lord Redesdale regarded all questions, whether great or small. There were few things which he did not consider to be better as they were rather than as they might be after alteration. Yet I do not remember any instance in which these strong political prepossessions influenced at all his conduct in the Chair. He was a strong, just, shrewd, and kind man. He was afraid of no one in or out of the House. He could say "No," and even a disagreeable "No," when the need arose; yet such was the simplicity and straightforwardness of his character, and the absence of all personal vanity from his disposition, that he never gave offence. The void created by his death will be difficult to fill, and it will be long before we cease to miss his respected and familiar presence in this place.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: Your Lordships will have listened with feelings of admiration and of regret to the touching language and judicious criticism that have fallen from the lips of the noble Earl who leads this House. He has in no way exaggerated the high qualities that distinguished Lord Redesdale, or the void which we shall have to fill when his place must be occupied again. The House will seem strange without that familiar figure, for he has played not only a long but a great part in the deliberations of this House. He governed the disposal of our Private Business at a time when Private Business was very different from what it is now, at a time when on the judgment and honesty and resolution of the noble Lord who occupied that Chair it depended whether our proceedings should or should not be made an instrument for the perpetration of much that was oppressive and even fraudulent. By his great courage and his discernment he has given a great power to the deliberations of this House in connection with matters of Private Business, a power which I trust we shall not speedily lose. His power was so great that his dictatorship had become proverbial, and yet that dictatorship was exercised, not by reason of any transcendent talents, but simply on account of the sterling and pellucid honesty of the man who exercised those powers. Nothing but that honesty could have procured for him, with so imperious an action, the respect which he uniformly secured. The noble Earl has alluded to the strength of his political opinions. There is no doubt that he was a very strong partizan; but I never knew him in all the strength of his partizanship stoop to wrest an argument or ignore a fact, and he possessed this quality, precious above all others and diminishing in these days—he had the courage of his individual opinions. He was not afraid to act upon what he individually believed to be right, and he was not deterred by any prevalence of public feeling against him from expressing his opinions courageously to the whole world. My Lords, he enjoyed the universal deference and respect of all Peers, not only of those who shared his own political opinions, but on both sides of the House. We may easily put into that Chair a man who shall be his equal in ability; I doubt whether we shall ever put into it one who will exceed him in the sterling honesty and clearness of his decisions, or in the universal respect and unanimity which those decisions commanded.

THE EARL OF CORK said, though he could not claim the gift of eloquence manifested by the two preceding speakers, yet, as one who had, perhaps, been more intimately associated with the late Lord Redesdale in the management of the Business of the House than any other Peer, he begged to be allowed to say how deeply he deplored his death, and to add his humble testimony to the great fairness, straightforwardness, and judiciousness which his late Friend brought to bear upon his work. In his decisions he did justice to everyone. Those among their Lordships who had served upon Committees with the noble Earl had never failed to be struck with the clearness and readiness of his decisions upon difficult and complicated points. Having been brought into constant contact with the noble Earl he was in a position to know how great a loss the House had sustained. They must derive what consolation they could from the fact that among the noble Lords who had taken part in the Private Business of the House many could be found actuated by as high a regard for justice as that which distinguished their noble Friend.

EARL GRANVILLE: Your Lordships will readily understand why I do not propose to take any action in the matter this evening. I will merely give Notice that I intend to place on the Paper the terms of a Motion for Monday next.

DROWNED PERSONS (DISCOVERY AND INTERMENT) BILL.—(No. 77.)

(*The Earl Stanhope.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

EARL STANHOPE, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that the effect of it was to extend the provisions of a former Act of Parliament—namely, an Act 48 *Geo.* III. c. 75. That Act enabled churchwardens or overseers to order the interment of bodies cast on shore from the sea to be buried, and the cost to be borne by the rates of the particular parish in which the bodies were found. The Bill extended this power by inserting the words "cast on shore from any tidal or navigable waters." Such an extension was really required, as the House would remember that lamentable difficulties arose in the case of the wreck of the *Princess Alice*, various parishes refusing to pay the cost of interment. The Bill had passed the House of Commons, with the approval of the Government and of both sides of the House, and he hoped it would be accepted by their Lordships.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Earl Stanhope.*)

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Thursday* next.

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)—DEATH OF A CHILD IN TOTNES WORKHOUSE.—QUESTION.

Viscount BARRINGTON asked Her Majesty's Government, Whether the inquiry having reference to the death of an infant in Totnes Workhouse, arising from overfeeding, has taken place; and, whether Her Majesty's Government can now give the results of that inquiry?

Lord SUDELEY (for the Local Government Board), in reply, said, that the Local Government Board had made inquiries into the matter, and had been furnished with copies of the depositions taken before the Coroner and with a copy of a report of a committee of the Totnes Guardians appointed to investigate the circumstances. The Board found that the medical officer of the workhouse gave directions that the child, who was ailing, should receive a pint of milk daily, and no other food. The matron of the workhouse was unaware of these directions, and allowed the pauper attendant in care of the child, who was aware of the doctor's directions, but did not inform the matron of them, to give it baked flour, which it appeared to have been unable to digest. The dietary tables approved by the Board expressly provided that infants under two years of age should be dieted as directed by the medical officer, and the orders of the Board imposed on the matron the duty of consulting the medical officer in reference to the dietary of such children. The Board had, therefore, been obliged to say that they thought the action of the matron deserving of serious censure. As, however, the committee of the Guardians had expressed the opinion that the matron believed she was acting for the best, and had warned her to observe strictly the regulations of the Board, the Board had not taken any further action in the matter, beyond cautioning the matron to be more careful in the future.

Earl Stanhope

DRAINAGE AND IMPROVEMENT OF LANDS (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 2.) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders under the Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) Act, 1863, and the Acts amending the same, relating to the Upper Nanny River Drainage District in the county of Meath, and the Greanagh River Drainage District in the county of Limerick—Was *presented* by The Lord Thurlow; read 1ª; and *referred* to the Examiners. (No. 84.)

House adjourned at a quarter before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 6*th May*, 1886.

MINUTES.]—Supply—*considered in Committee Resolutions* [May 3] *reported—Postponed Resolution* (No. 25) *considered; debate adjourned.*

Public Bills—*Ordered—First Reading—*Arms (Ireland) * [205].

Second Reading—Railway and Canal Traffic [138].

*Referred to Select Committee—*Ulster Canal and Tyrone Navigation * [141].

Committee—International and Colonial Copyright [156]—R.P.

Considered as amended — Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2) [200].

*Considered as amended—Third Reading—*Highways Acts Amendment [149], and *passed.*

QUESTIONS.

INLAND REVENUE—THE INCOME TAX (IRELAND).

Sir JOSEPH M'KENNA (Monaghan, S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the amount returned as assessed to Income Tax in the Statistical Abstract under Schedule (B) for the year 1884 (Ireland) £9,982,117 is not erroneous; or at any rate arrived at on a different principle from that applied in making up the sums in same Schedule and in same Abstract, for England and Scotland, which are returned at £48,025,698, and £7,506,365 respectively; whether in fact the annual value assessable under Schedule (B) for Scotland is not greatly in excess of the amount assessable in Ireland under a like Schedule; and, whether, if the facts are as implied in the above questions, corrections shall be made to adjust the figures in future Abstracts?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The amounts printed on page 25 of the Statistical Abstract under Schedule B are the gross values of lands under Schedule A of the tax, a note at the foot of the page explaining that the profits from the occupation of lands (*i.e.*, the amount which is charged to Income Tax under Schedule B) are by law deemed to be equal in England to one-half, and in Scotland and Ireland to one-third, of the full annual value of the lands. No distinction in principle has been followed in ascertaining assessments in England as contrasted with Scotland and Ireland. In England the gross value of lands in 1883-4 was £48,025,698; deductions for incomes under £150, abatements, &c., £20,881,469, leaving net amount for assessment £27,144,229, which was charged to duty at 2½*d.* in the pound by Act 46 *Vict.*, c. 10, less one-eighth previously allowed by 5 & 6 *Vict.*, c. 35, s. 63. In Scotland the gross value of lands was £7,506,365; deductions, abatements, &c., £3,882,378; net assessment, £3,623,987, which was charged to duty at 1¾*d.* in the pound by the 46th *Vict.* c. 10. In Ireland the gross value of lands was £9,982,117; deductions, abatements, &c., £7,290,284; net assessments, £2,691,833, upon which duty was charged at the same rate as in Scotland.

COURT OF BANKRUPTCY (IRELAND)—DELAYS OF LIQUIDATION.

MR. PETER M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If his attention has been called to a recent Report of the proceedings in the Irish Court of Bankruptcy presided over by Judge Miller, by which it appeared that a number of cases, some of which were over thirty years in liquidation, now came up, after the audit of the chief clerk, Re Charles Henry James, ex-official assignee; and, whether the Government purpose introducing a Bill to remedy these and other abuses in the Irish Court of Bankruptcy?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): I have not seen the Report to which the hon. Member refers; but I have made inquiries, and find that a number of cases were set down for audit lately of very old standing, three or four being of more than 30 years' standing. In no case was the balance a large one, and I am informed that these very old cases were probably overlooked when the Court was remodelled in 1857. The cases to which this explanation does not apply are of much less standing, probably 10 to 20 years. I do not know that there is any intention on the part of the Government to introduce an Irish Bankruptcy Bill.

COURT OF BANKRUPTCY (IRELAND)—IRREGULARITIES.

MR. PETER M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether it is a fact that a case scheduled No. 1578 in the Irish Court of Bankruptcy, and adjudicated on the 13th of October 1863, is yet not wound up; whether all the creditors in said case have received their final dividends; and, whether the name of the bankrupt was incorrectly indexed, and other names under the letter K in same index were cut out, so as to prevent proper reference being made to the records of the Court?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The case referred to, No. 1578, is not a case of bankruptcy, but of arrangement, the lands of the debtor being vested in trustees. No dividends were payable through the Court, and the only money received was £16 12*s.* 7*d.*, which has been duly accounted by the Official Assignee. I am informed that the name of the debtor was correctly indexed, and that the cutting out of part of a page in the Index was due to some names under the letter "H" having been by inadvertence entered under the letter "K," and the excision was made in order to facilitate reference to the Index Book.

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—ARKLOW BREAKWATER.

MR. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether he is aware that one of his predecessors in office, in reply to a Question on 26th February 1885, as to the damage to the Arklow Breakwater, stated—

"The recent storms have caused a slight subsidence, which is of no structural importance, and has been remedied at a trifling cost;"

whether, after many ineffectual attempts on the part of the Harbour Committee, representing the ratepayers, who have guaranteed repayment of the loan of twenty thousand pounds, to get an inquiry, the Engineer of the Board of Works, who designed the Breakwater, reported, 20th April 1885, that the sand foundations had been scoured out by the sea, which scouring out extended under the storm wall for its entire width of nineteen and a half feet; whether his attention has been called to a paper just laid upon the Table, from which it appears an additional sum of ten thousand five hundred pounds will be required to carry out the recommendations of Messrs. Stevenson and Stoney, which sum it is proposed to charge upon the rates; whether he is aware that the ship and boat owners from the first condemned the plans of the Board of Works; and, whether the ratepayers will be called on for a fresh guarantee under all the circumstances of the case?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The statements in the first two paragraphs of the Question are substantially correct. Before the extra expense, £10,500, involved in Messrs. Stevenson and Stoney's recommendations is incurred, the consent of the Town Commissioners to that amount being charged on the town rates would have to be obtained. With regard to paragraph 4, I am informed that the ship and boat owners of Arklow, though at first objecting to the design of the Board of Works' Engineer, have from time to time disagreed among themselves. They, however, appear to be now in favour of the execution of the works in accordance with the original design with slight modifications, with one exception—namely, the northern groins. No decision has yet been come to as to Messrs. Stevenson and Stoney's plan. If the additional expenditure of £10,500 is incurred it would have to be guaranteed in the same manner as the £20,000.

POST OFFICE (SCOTLAND)—THE INVERNESS POST OFFICE.

MR. FINLAY (Inverness, &c.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether, having regard to the fact that the Post Office authorities, recognising the necessity of increased postal accommodation for the town of Inverness, acquired a site for a new post office there, upon which they have been paying a feu duty since Whitsunday 1885, it is the intention of the postal authorities, in the interests of the general community at Inverness, to order the work of building the new post office to be proceeded with without further delay?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): Plans for the proposed new Post Office at Inverness have been prepared; but some alterations were found necessary in order to provide more complete and satisfactory accommodation. Fresh plans are now being made in Her Majesty's Office of Works, and are expected to be ready within a few weeks. The Postmaster General is anxious that no time should be lost in settling them, and in proceeding with the erection of the building.

NAVAL PENSIONS—SAMUEL BARBER.

MR. JAMES HUTTON (Manchester, N.) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, The grounds upon which the Admiralty refuse to pay to Samuel Barber, Naval Pensioner, residing in Manchester, the full pension to which he is entitled according to Regulation, No. 121, of June 1853, having served sixteen years in the Navy, and having been discharged in consequence of injury received while on duty, and also holding two good conduct medals?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. HIBBERT) (Oldham): Sir, Samuel Barber voluntarily left the Service in 1864, after 10 years' time had been completed, and before he became entitled to any pension. Having remained out of the Service for more than five years Barber could not count his former time; and on re-entry therefore, in 1869, he commenced a new career. Having been invalided in 1875, after a service of nearly six years, he received the utmost pension that the Regulations empower us to grant from Naval Funds. Being unable to work, this pension was supplemented from Greenwich Hospital Funds, and for the last nine years he has received a pension from that source.

TRAMWAYS (METROPOLIS).

SIR GUYER HUNTER (Hackney, Central) asked the Chairman of the

Metropolitan Board of Works, Whether his attention has been called to the serious accidents which are frequently occurring through the defective and dangerous condition of the Tramway metals in the London streets; and, whether the time has not arrived when some responsible officer should be charged with the duty of frequently inspecting the numerous Tramway routes in the Metropolis?

THE CHAIRMAN (Sir JAMES M'GAREL-HOGG) (Middlesex, Hornsey): My attention has been called from time to time to accidents attributed to defects in the condition of tramway metals; but I am not aware that, generally speaking, they are either defective or dangerous. The streets of the Metropolis are under the control of the Vestries and District Boards, who have their properly qualified and responsible surveyors; and I do not see the necessity of appointing a special officer to discharge the duty of inspecting tramway routes.

MERCHANDISE MARKS ACT, 1862—MARKING OF BRITISH-MADE GOODS.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the President of the Board of Trade, If Her Majesty's Government propose to provide by Law for the marking of all British-made goods, in accordance with the suggestion of the Master Cutler of Sheffield to the Royal Commission on Trade and Industry, and to prohibit the sale of articles bearing false or misleading names and marks; and, in such case, if he can fix the date upon which he will introduce a Bill of such consequence to British manufacturers and workmen?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside): We had prepared a measure before Easter for the amendment of the Merchandise Marks Act, 1862; but, after conferring with our Representatives at the International Conference at Rome, including the Master Cutler, it was deemed advisable not to introduce a measure until after the Conference had completed its labours.

THE DOVER HARBOUR BOARD.

MAJOR DICKSON (Dover) asked the President of the Board of Trade, If his attention has been called to the following extract from the Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council of Dover, held on the 20th of April, relating to the recent appointment of Mr. Lowndes as the Board of Trade representative at the Dover Harbour Board:—

> "The Mayor having announced that Councillor William Henry Crundall has received an intimation from the President of the Board of Trade that he has appointed Mr. Lowndes to act in his place as the representative of the Board of Trade on the Dover Harbour Board, this Council desires to point out to the President of the Board of Trade that the office has hitherto been considered to be one made for life; that the appointment of Mr. Crundall gave the utmost satisfaction to the inhabitants of the borough generally; that it received the unanimous approval of the local press; and that Mr. Crundall, from his mercantile and other interests in the borough and his great business abilities, is, in the opinion of the Council, a most fit and proper representative of the Board of Trade; the Council earnestly hopes that the President will not deprive the Department or the Harbour of such an excellent representative, nor inflict such a grievous personal insult upon a member of the Council; and it is ordered that copies of this Resolution be sent to the President of the Board of Trade, the Lord Warden, and the members of the Harbour Board;"

if he will explain to the House why he adopted the unprecedented course of cancelling an appointment made by his immediate predecessor in office; and, whether he will lay upon the Table of the House Copies of all Correspondence which has taken place between himself (or the Board of Trade) and Earl Granville (President of the Dover Harbour Board) and the Treasury or others upon this subject?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside): Yes, Sir; my attention has been called to the extract in question. The Dover Harbour Board is a Board representing a variety of interests — the Government, the Town Council, and the two Railway Companies—and is presided over, *ex officio*, by the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. Under the Act constituting the Board, it is the duty of the Dover Town Council to appoint two gentlemen to represent the interests of their own body; but they are in no way concerned in the appointment of the representatives nominated by the Government. The Railway Companies also appoint their own representatives, whom they change from time to time. Under these circumstances, it is important that the representative of the Government should be perfectly independent, more especially considering the large expenditure of public money which is now contemplated at Dover. No personal affront has been intended or offered to Mr. Crundall; but as he is a gentleman who is engaged in negotiating large contracts with the local Railway Companies, I felt that he did not fulfil the conditions that I have named. No correspondence has passed between the Board of Trade and the Treasury, and I have only received one letter from Earl Granville in the matter, which the hon. and gallant Member can have if he likes to move for it. I may add that the gentleman we have appointed meets all the requirements of the post. He is a resident proprietor at Dover, with independent means and leisure. He has always devoted himself to public business. He was for many years the Chairman of Quarter Sessions and of the Highway Board in Salop; and in politics, I am told, he is a staunch Conservative.

Major DICKSON asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that the other representative was interested in Railway Companies; and whether the Government intended to remove him also?

Mr. MUNDELLA: I am not aware of that fact; but he is not appointed by the Board of Trade. I am only responsible for the appointments made in my own Department.

Major DICKSON gave Notice that on the earliest day possible he should call attention to this matter, and move a Resolution.

Sir EDWARD WATKIN (Hythe) asked on what authority the right hon. Gentleman made the statement that Mr. Crundall had negotiated large contracts with Railway Companies?

Mr. MUNDELLA was understood to say, in reply, that it had been set forth in a printed document, issued by Mr. Crundall himself, that he had from time to time negotiated large railway contracts.

INLAND REVENUE—HERB BEER.

Mr. BANISTER FLETCHER (Wilts, Chippenham) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If his attention has been called to the fact that the Excise Officers have interfered with and stopped the sale of Herb Beer, and if he will state why there has been any interference with the manufacture and sale of this non-intoxicating beverage; and, if he is prepared to propose such an alteration in the law relating to non-intoxicating liquors as shall place their manufacture and sale upon a more satisfactory footing?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt)(Derby), in reply, said, he had had an opportunity of examining this question, and the fact was that, according to the law, no beer could be brewed under the name of herb beer which had more than two degrees of alcohol; but the Inland Revenue did not interfere if it was under three degrees of proof spirit—that was to say, that they did not take notice of the fractions between two and three degrees of proof spirits. If these liquors were brewed stronger than that they practically became beer in the ordinary sense of the word, and ought to be so treated. Some of these non-intoxicating liquors sold as temperance drinks had been found to be of considerably greater strength than London porter. He found that it was the fact that many of these temperance drinks were popular in proportion to the number of degrees of proof spirit which they contained. The consequence was that, for the protection of the Revenue, it was impossible to allow drinks of this character to be treated as non-intoxicating if they contained more than three degrees of proof spirit.

CIVIL SERVICE WRITERS AND CLERKS.

Sir GUYER HUNTER (Hackney, Central) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether the Treasury has come to any decision in the case of the Civil Service writers; if not, when it may reasonably be looked for?

Mr BAZLEY WHITE (Gravesend) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the exact date can now be given when the new regulations concerning the future position of Civil Service writers will come into operation; and, if not, considering the promises given from time to time by him, at what probable future date such information can be granted?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): I can only refer the hon. Members who have asked Questions 8 and 12 to the answers which I gave on the same subject to the hon. Members for Camberwell and East

Donegal, respectively, on the 29th of March and 9th of April. I can assure the House that the question of the Civil Service writers is receiving the most careful attention of the Treasury; but I cannot undertake to fix the date at which the decision of the Treasury will be arrived at.

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—PORTPATRICK HARBOUR.

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright) (for Sir HERBERT MAXWELL) (Wigton) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether he is aware of the further threatened destruction of public and private property at Portpatrick Harbour, owing to the removal of natural defences in the course of forming the Government works, which, having been abandoned, are now going to ruin; whether he will consider the propriety of removing from the entrance of the harbour some of the fallen masonry, and carrying it back to the inner end so as to afford a protection against further damage to the public road and private house property; and, whether he will cause inquiry to be made into what would be the probable cost of such an undertaking?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside): The Board of Trade are not aware of the present state of Portpatrick Harbour, which is not under their control; and, having regard to the Report made to them by Mr. Trevor and Sir George Nares, and presented to Parliament in June, 1884, they do not propose to make any further inquiry or to undertake the works suggested by the hon. Member.

PARCEL POST—CONVENTIONS WITH FRANCE AND ITALY.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the Postmaster General has any objection to lay upon the Table of the House papers respecting an International Parcels Post with France and Italy, which would enable the House to understand the nature of the difficulties which have already retarded this arrangement for more than two years?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER): In reply to the hon. Member, I beg to say that it would be unusual, while negotiations are in progress—and such is the case as regards the Parcel Post Conventions with France and Italy—to publish the Correspondence. The Postmaster General informs me that the difficulties which have prevented the establishment of a Parcel Post with France and Italy at as early a date as with some other Continental countries are on the point of being satisfactorily settled; and he hopes that the Parcel Post with the two countries in question will now be speedily inaugurated.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) ACTS—AMENDING LEGISLATION.

MR. DUCKHAM (Herefordshire, Leominster) asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Whether he can inform the House of the number of cattle that have been slaughtered in Great Britain in order to stamp out pleuro-pneumonia, under the provisions of "The Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act, 1878," also the number that have been reported to have died whilst suffering with the disease, and the amount of compensation paid out of local rates for the cattle slaughtered; whether he can enumerate the counties or places in great Britain in which the disease was reported to have existed during the week ending 20th March, 1886; and, whether he can supply similar information from Ireland? He further asked when the Bill would be introduced?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY (Sir UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH) (Lancashire, Clitheroe): I can assure my hon. Friend that each of the points mentioned in his Question has been carefully considered in the preparation of the Bill. But it would not be regular, until the Bill is introduced, to enter into any details as to its clauses. Lord Spencer is anxious to introduce the Bill as soon as possible in the other House; but some delay is unavoidable owing to the necessity of communicating with three Departments. An answer has been received from the Irish Office; but there is no answer as yet from the Scotch Office, nor from the Local Government Board.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) ACT, 1878—COMPULSORY SLAUGHTER—AMOUNT OF COST AND INCIDENCE.

MR. DUCKHAM (Herefordshire, Leominster) asked the Chancellor of the

Duchy of Lancaster, Whether the promised Bill for amending the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act of 1878 will extend the provisions of Clause 20 of that Act from 56 to 90 days after the cessation of the disease before the local authority shall declare the place free from pleuro-pneumonia; whether it will provide for the slaughter of cattle that have been in the same shed, herd, or in contact with cattle affected with pleuro-pneumonia; and, whether the delegations of powers to the local authorities by the Privy Council will be so regulated as to promote a greater uniformity in the orders for the movement of animals and in giving effect to the general provisions of the Act?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY (Sir UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH) (Lancashire, Clitheroe) said, the number of cattle slaughtered in Great Britain under the Act of 1878 to stamp out pleuro-pneumonia has been 20,525; in Ireland 11,150, while 455 have died in Great Britain, and 251 in Ireland. The amount paid out of local rates for cattle slaughtered has been, in Great Britain, £239,576 6*s.* 7*d.* (including compensation for swine slaughtered for swine fever up to the end of 1883); in Ireland the amount has been £74,889 for cattle slaughtered. The following are the British counties and Irish Poor Law Unions in which pleuro-pneumonia was reported to exist in the week ending 20th March:—British Counties — Chester, Cumberland, Hants, Kent, Lancaster, Middlesex, Salop, the Metropolis, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Fife, Forfar, Roxburgh, and Selkirk. Irish Poor Law Unions—Balrothery, North Dublin, South Dublin, and Rathdown. In the week ending 24th April pleuro-pneumonia was reported in all the foregoing counties except Cheshire and Roxburghshire, and in the following:—namely, Dorset, Norfolk, Surrey, West Sussex, Warwick, West Riding, and Kincardine. In Ireland cases were reported in all the foregoing Unions except Balrothery.

NAVY—OBSOLETE VESSELS OF WAR.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, If he would have any objection to grant a Return showing the number of Gun-boats, Gun-vessels, Sloops, and Corvettes which are now in commission, and which are, in the opinion of the Admiralty, obsolete as Vessels of War; and also the Expenditure which will have to be incurred during the next two years in repairing or refitting vessels which cannot steam ten knots per hour, in order to provide the necessary reliefs?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. HIBBERT) (Oldham): I trust the noble Lord will not press for the Return asked for in the first part of his Question, as it is extremely difficult to draw the line at the precise stage at which a ship becomes obsolete as a vessel of war. With regard to the second part of the Question, I may state that the list of ships for reliefs, which governs the programme for repairs, has only been arranged for one year. In this repairing programme only one vessel, the *Starling*, is included, which has a measured mile speed of less than 10 knots—namely, 9·7 knots. This vessel will be refitted and recommissioned at Malta if the estimated cost of her repair, which has not yet been received, is not considered excessive.

NAVY—H.M.S. "THUNDERER."

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD (Marylebone, E.) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether, considering the present useless state of Her Majesty's Ship *Thunderer* for fighting purposes, the Admiralty will give directions for her to be paid off in order to have her made effective, and transfer her officers and men to some more efficient vessel for service on the Mediterranean station?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. HIBBERT) (Oldham): The *Thunderer* is at present at Malta, completing her refit, which was interrupted during a brief visit to Suda Bay. There is no reason to believe that after this refit she will not be efficient for further service.

INLAND REVENUE—EXCISE—CHICORY.

MR. ALFRED PEASE (York) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If he is aware that the formerly important industry of the cultivation of chicory has been almost entirely destroyed by the Duty imposed on chicory, and by the manner of collecting the Excise; and, whether, having regard to the fact that in 1860, prior to the imposition of a Duty, there were in the neighbourhood of York alone more than 1,000 acres, and in 1884, throughout England, not more than 74 acres under the cultivation of this crop, and in 1860, for every ton grown in England, we imported one ton, and in 1884, 40½ tons from Abroad, he will consider the advisability of abolishing or reducing the English chicory Duty?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby), in reply, said, that chicory being used as a substitute for coffee, it was necessary to impose a duty upon it, whether it was home-grown or not. The present duty upon imported chicory was 13*s.* 3*d.* per cwt., and the Excise duty upon home-grown chicory was 12*s.* 1*d.* per cwt. The difference in favour of the home-grown article was intended to be a compensation to the grower for his being placed under Excise regulations, although these were very slight, and did not in any way interfere with the cultivation. The Inland Revenue authorities were of opinion that the decrease in the growth of chicory was not in any way due to the duty. From 1865 to 1872, when the Excise duty was 24*s.* 2*d.* per cwt., the average amount charged with duty per annum was 13,600 cwt.; while since then, with a duty of 12*s*, 1*d.*, or one-half the former duty, the quantity on which it was charged had fallen to 4,500 cwt. This showed that it was not the duty that discouraged the growth. The Inland Revenue authorities were of opinion that the decrease in the growth of chicory was due to the fact that chicory could not be grown in England to advantage in competition with foreign-grown chicory.

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE—THE CENTRAL OFFICE.

MR. RYLANDS (Burnley) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, When it is probable that the inquiry now being conducted by a Departmental Committee into the Constitution and Expenditure of the Central Office of the Supreme Court of Judicature will be completed; and, whether he will lay upon the Table of the House the Report of the Committee?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The inquiry referred to is being actively prosecuted; but I cannot say when it will be completed. The Report of the Committee will be presented to the Lord Chancellor, whom I will consult as to laying it upon the Table of the House.

EGYPT—ARMY OF OCCUPATION (NUMBERS).

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he can state the number of British soldiers now in Egypt, together with an approximate Estimate of the rate of cost per annum to the British Treasury of the occupation?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. HERBERT GLADSTONE) (Leeds, W.) (who replied) said: The approximate number of British troops now serving in Egypt is 14,000; but orders have been given which will reduce the force to about 9,000. The extra cost of the occupation beyond the ordinary expense of the troops may be taken at £700,000 a-year, towards which the estimated contribution by the Egyptian Government is £170,000.

CANALS AND RAILWAY COMPANIES.

MR. HERBERT GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether he can inform the House as to the number of canals in the United Kingdom whose navigation is now under the control, direct or indirect, of Railway Companies; and, how many canals are independent of the control of Railway Companies?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside): The number of canals, including canal navigations, now under the control of Railway Companies is 39, with an aggregate length of 1,436 miles. There are also 40 other canals with an aggregate length of 1,592 miles; but how far any of these navigations are indirectly under the control of Railway Companies I am unable to state. In the Appendix to the Report of the Select Committee on Canals in 1883, at pages 215 and 217, will be found a statement of the names and lengths of the canals and canal navigations under the control of Railway Companies and the respective periods when they came under the control of those Companies.

ARMY—RETIRED OFFICERS.

Captain VERNEY (Bucks, N. Buckingham) asked the Financial Secretary to the War Office, Whether it is the case that Captains of Militia Regiments and Volunteer Corps are, under certain regulations, allowed to retire, with permission to retain their rank and to wear their uniform; whether this privilege is afforded to Captains of other Regiments; and, whether any list is kept of these Officers; and, if not, whether he will consider the advisability of having a list drawn up and published from time to time?

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. Herbert Gladstone) (Leeds, W.): Captains of Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers are allowed, after 15 years' commissioned service, to retire with a step of honorary rank, and with permission to retain their rank and to wear their uniform. Captains of the Regular Forces are allowed to retain their rank and wear the uniform after similar service. A list of generals, field officers, and captains retired from the Army with permission to retain their rank and wear the prescribed uniform is published in the Official Army List. A list is also given of the field officers retired from the Auxiliary Forces, including captains who have obtained the honorary rank of major on retirement. To extend this list to captains of Auxiliary Forces who have retired with permission to retain the rank of captain would be difficult, and would involve considerable labour. The Secretary of State will, however, consider the suggestion.

NAVY—BURSTING OF A GUN ON H.M.S. "COLLINGWOOD."

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether any information in addition to that which has appeared in the newspapers could be given with regard to the bursting of a gun on board the *Collingwood;* and what number of rounds were required at the trial test of this gun before it was passed?

Lord CHARLES BERESFORD (Marylebone, E.) asked how many guns of a similar pattern were ordered by the Admiralty; how many were already mounted; to what test they had been subjected; and whether, having regard to the demoralizing effect produced by a doubt as to the life of a gun, the Admiralty would request that all the 43-ton guns, mounted or not, should be subjected to higher tests than had been already used?

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Hibbert) (Oldham), in reply, said, that although no life was lost by the unfortunate accident which occurred on the firing of the gun it was an accident much to be deplored. The gun referred to was one of 11 which had been made at Woolwich for the use of the Admiralty. Of that number 10 were mounted—four upon the *Colossus,* two on the *Conqueror,* and four on the *Collingwood.* One of the guns upon the *Collingwood* was fired without any bad result previously to the bursting of the gun now being spoken of. The guns of the *Colossus* had been fired upon many occasions at sea, and also the guns upon the *Conqueror.* With regard to the testing of the guns before they were mounted, he must refer the noble Lord to the Surveyor General of the Ordnance. Immediately upon the accident being known at the Admiralty Lord Ripon conferred with the Ordnance Department, and it was agreed that steps should be taken at once with a view to the strengthening of all the guns he had alluded to. The Ordnance Committee which sat last year, and which was a very strong Committee, recommended that these guns should remain unaltered, but that the full charge should not be used in firing them. The gun which burst was tested with a charge of 221¼lb., which was only three-fourths of the usual charge. He trusted the House would be satisfied that the Admiralty had at once taken action with a view to prevent the recurrence of a similar accident.

Sir WALTER B. BARTTELOT (Sussex, North-West) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, whether the 10 guns served by the Ordnance Department to the Admiralty were to be returned to that Department to be strengthened, and, he presumed, to be tested? He should like to ask the Surveyor General of Ordnance what course he intended to take with regard to an important question of this kind?

The SURVEYOR GENERAL of ORDNANCE (Mr. Woodall) (Hanley) said, he had very little to add to the reply which had been given. With regard to this particular gun concerned in the accident of Tuesday, he might state that it was one of a class which had been reported upon by a special Ordnance Committee, whose Report was presented to the House in July of last year, and which Committee reported in respect of that particular gun that was to remain unaltered, but that the charge of 295 lb. was not to be exceeded. The House was aware that the charge under which the gun burst was only three-fourths of that amount, whereas the same gun had been fired nine times previously, four of the rounds having exceeded the regulation charge, being as high as 340 lb. He believed that the statements in the newspapers were substantially accurate as to the circumstances. They were also such, however, that the House would see that they called for a minute and particular inquiry, and a special Committee of experts had been appointed to conduct an inquiry. Their Report would be presented as soon as possible.

SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE—GREECE AND THE POWERS.

MR. BOURKE (Lynn Regis): In the absence of my right hon. Friend the Member for West Bristol (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), and at his request, I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he can inform the House of any negotiations which are going on between the Powers and Greece; and whether the Powers adhere to the Collective Note which was presented to Greece a few days ago?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): Bearing in mind the Notice given by the right hon. Gentleman the other day, I have put myself in a position to give the latest information in my power to the House, though I cannot make a final statement, nor is the statement which I have to make altogether of a satisfactory nature. What has happened with respect to what is known as the Greek difficulty is this. A Note was presented which required the disarmament of Greece with a view of putting an end to the state of uncertainty and expectation, attended with hazard and also with vast expense, which prevails in the East. To that Note there was returned an answer which was in the opinion of the Powers inadequate, and in its particulars not satisfactory. A further Note has been presented to the Greek Government to-day, which points out to the Greek Government that, in the opinion of the Powers, the assurances given in their reply with respect to disarmament are insufficient to meet the case; and to the question whether they are sufficient or not we apply a very simple test. Are they assurances on the ground of which we can expect, in point of propriety, that Turkey would be called upon, or on grounds of prudence she could venture herself, to discontinue the costly preparations which she has been obliged to make in consequence of the action of Greece? We do not think that the reply of Greece is a reply on which we could found an application to Turkey to that effect, and on which Turkey could be expected voluntarily to adopt that course. Therefore, Sir, as I have said, a fresh Note has to-day been presented by the Powers to the Greek Government, which I think will bring the matter to some issue within a very short time. Should the answer of the Greek Government to that Note presented to-day not be a sufficient answer, steps will at once be taken of a nature which will, in the judgment of the Powers, tend to secure the great object we all have in view.

EGYPT—SIR HENRY WOLFF'S MISSION.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): There is another Question, also, of public interest, which stands in the printed list in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for St. Pancras (Sir Julian Goldsmid), who does not appear in his place owing to some accident. It is—

> "Whether any further information can be given to the House with regard to the mission of Moukhtar Pasha and Sir Henry Wolff to Egypt, and with regard to the proposals made by the Turkish Commissioner?"

My reply is this—that after a very careful examination of the plans of Moukhtar Pasha for the re-organization of the Egyptian Army, Her Majesty's Government came to the conclusion that we could not properly agree to them; and in consequence Sir Henry Wolff, in accordance with instructions received from home, has communicated this reply to Moukhtar Pasha, and has likewise inquired whether he could so modify them as to meet the objections which we have found it our duty to take. We are not in a condition yet to say whether that can be done; but copies both of the proposals by Moukhtar Pasha and of the reply will be presented to Parliament. I may add that upon all other matters connected with the Mission the communications between Moukhtar Pasha and Sir Henry Wolff continue as before; but they have not yet reached a stage at which it would be possible with convenience to present them to Parliament.

PUBLIC BILLS—SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL—ALTERATION OF DATE.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle) said, he wished to make an appeal to the Speaker on a personal matter of a peculiar nature. It would be remembered that yesterday, when the House went into Committee on the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill, he undertook at once not to proceed, but to ask that the Committee should report Progress. When the question was put to him as to what date he would take the Committee again he said Friday, the 7th May. In that view he was corroborated by the hon. Members who sat around him; but on looking at the Votes this morning he found the date mentioned as Friday, the 7th June. There was no Friday, June 7; but the Clerks at the Table had, in a revised edition of the Order Book, put the Bill down for Friday, June 4. He wished to know whether the Speaker could not by the exercise of his authority alter the date as previously mentioned, he giving an undertaking to communicate with all Members who had Amendments against the Bill, and arranging with them not to proceed until June without their consent?

MR. SPEAKER said, it would not be within his duty to alter the date. The date had been deliberately named by him from the Chair, and taken down by the Clerk at the Table. It was quite true that there was no Friday falling on June 7; but as an impression had gone forth that the Bill would be taken on that date, he would suggest that it might be fair to take the Bill on the Friday nearest to that date.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC BILL.

(*Mr. Mundella, Mr. Acland, Mr. Attorney General.*)

[BILL 138.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Mundella.*)

MR. J. C. BOLTON (Stirling), in rising to move an Amendment, said, he would have to claim more than the usual indulgence of the House, for, in addition to the other difficulties of his position, he had the misfortune to be a Railway Director. He feared that it was a too common opinion amongst hon. Members that on railway questions it was quite impossible for a Railway Director to see that the question had two sides. He could assure hon. Gentlemen who held that view that there was not one amongst them more convinced than he was that the prosperity of railways and the prosperity of traders were inseparably connected, and that injury to the one by mismanagement or misconduct must reflect adversely on the other. It was in that spirit that he approached the consideration of the Bill now before the House, as well as the lucid speech with which the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Mundella) introduced it on a former occasion. The right hon. Gentleman had attached to his Bill a Memorandum, which stated that the principal object of the Bill was to perpetuate the Railway Commission created by the Railway Regulation Act, 1873, to alter its constitution, and to enlarge its powers. He was confident that if this Bill became law in the form in which it was presented to the House, whatever might have been the intention of its framers, the main result of the legislation would be very different indeed from that represented by the right hon. Gentleman. He should like to say a few words on that much abused tribunal, the Railway Commissioners' Court. That Court was handicapped from the outset. It was thought that it was established, not to do legal justice between railway shareholders and railway traders, but to protect railway traders, whether they were legally right or legally wrong; and he was sorry to say that that opinion, whether justly entertained or not, had received some additional force from the remarks of his right hon. Friend in introducing that Bill. His right hon. Friend stated that the jurisdiction of the Commission had been considerably limited and its usefulness circumscribed since its appointment by the action of the Courts of Law. That was as much as to say, if he might interpret these words, that the usefulness of the Commission consisted to some extent, at all events, in its power of overriding the law. It was to be presumed that the Superior Courts gave correct decisions. He wished to express his own views of the Railway Commission Court. He had been interested, directly or indirectly, in many cases brought before that Court, and he was always struck by the intelligence of the Commissioners, by their evident desire to master the facts of the case that came before them, and he had never heard anyone suggest the slightest suspicion of its impartiality. So convinced was he of the honourable way in which the Commissioners had acted that he had voluntarily proposed that they should be selected as arbitrators in preference to anyone else in a great railway case, being convinced that they would do their best to master the intricacies of the question, and might be depended upon to give an honest opinion. That course was taken, and those who adopted it had no reason to regret having done so. If the existing Commission was handicapped, so would the proposed Body be, because although it might be strengthened and in one sense improved by being made perpetual, it would still be handicapped, unless the right hon. Gentleman gave the House such explanation as would do away with the impression that it was not to be a Court to do strict legal justice between suitors, but to protect traders wherever the law failed to do it. The Court would never have the confidence of the public unless the same rights were granted to railway shareholders when they pleaded before it in the capacity of shareholders as would be granted to them if they pleaded before any Court in any other capacity, and unless they had as full rights as were granted to every other suitor. That Bill contained provisions to enable every conceivable combination of traders or agriculturists, or associations of men who called themselves traders, or Corporate Bodies, or County Authorities, whatever they might be, to prosecute—or he might rather say to persecute—Railway Companies. The Railway Companies did not object to those powers being granted to combinations of traders and associations of agriculturists, or to any number of men, under whatever name they put themselves, provided they were to pay their own expenses; but they objected, and objected very strongly, to the provision enabling Corporate Bodies and Local Authorities to bring actions against Railway Companies, although they were not themselves interested in the matters complained of, and to charge the costs on the ratepayers. The Bill provided that the Commission should make the costs follow the event if they so thought fit; but it was well known that the Railway Companies were, in many cases, the largest contributors—often enormous contributors—to the rates in the districts through which they ran; and thus they might be prosecuted on some frivolous pretext, and might have costs awarded to them by the Court, and yet have to pay them in the form of rates practically out of their own pockets. His right hon. Friend had given the House an interesting retrospect of railway legislation; but, unfortunately, he began with the year 1854. But the legislation of 1844 had a most important bearing on that question. At that period an Act relating to railways was passed based on the Report of the Committee that was presided over by the present Prime Minister; and the Act itself was introduced into the House by that right hon. Gentleman. It provided the mode in which the revision of railway rates under the authority of Parliament should take place—namely, that the railway should have existed for a certain number of years, and that it should have been earning for three consecutive half-years a dividend of not less than 10 per cent; and, further, it provided that if Parliament undertook to revise the rates, Parliament should at the same time guarantee that that revision should not entail a loss on the Railway Companies. Again, in 1865, the legislation which had provided that the revision of railway rates should take place after 21 years (a clause in a subsequent Act said 15 years) was considered by the

Commission of 1865 to which his right hon. Friend had referred. That Commission adopted the recommendation of the Committee of 1854 that Parliament should take no steps that should give rise to the suspicion that they intended in breach of good faith to interfere with privileges which they had already granted. Moreover, in 1867, it reported that the railways which were in existence in 1844 were outside the powers of Parliament with respect to the proposed revision, and that they could only be dealt with, if Parliament required to deal with them at all, by paying them compensation. Now, there was no doubt that this clause, to which he had frequently referred, bringing all railways dated subsequently to 1844 under the provisions of any Act which this Parliament might subsequently pass, might be held applicable to some of those railways which were then existing; and in view of that the opinion of the Royal Commission, so much lauded by the President of the Board of Trade, was worthy, at all events, of some consideration. This Commission went on to say that all future railways should be conceded on the condition of being subject to a reduction of the maximum rates and tolls where, after 15 years from the passing of the Act, the profits should exceed 10 per cent. That was a confirmation of the opinion of the Committee which sat in 1844, and by this House, which passed the Bill founded upon that recommendation of the Committee in the same year. For his own part, he was no lawyer; he was only a very plain man; but he thought that it would be most unjust for that House to deal with railways which were in existence before 1844 without paying them full compensation for the losses they would certainly sustain by this proposed legislation. He did not like to use the word "confiscation" because it was an ugly one, but no other word would satisfactorily express his view of the result of the proposal contained in this Bill. It might be legally right; it might be that the Attorney General and other learned Members of that House would be able to show that technically the Railway Companies to which he referred had forfeited their rights by accepting the clause in question; but he was sure that the public would hold that they had accepted the concessions they had obtained from Parliament to make railways on condition of receiving the privileges which were conferred by those Acts, with the belief that those privileges should not be withdrawn, unless compensation was given for them in some shape or another. All that the Railway Companies desired was that they should be treated in an equitable and an honourable manner, and that they should not be compelled to place their whole property at the mercy of Parliament, who was to have power to deal with it without consulting them. The right hon. Gentleman, however, had lumped all the railways together, including those representing a capital of £48,000,000 that had never paid a dividend at all, those which had never paid a dividend exceeding 3 per cent—old and young—some which had not even earned a penny—and said the whole of them must submit to such reduction, only he called it remission, in their rates as Parliament chose to impose upon them. The right hon. Gentleman did not speak very highly of the Committee which sat in 1881-2; and the impression he (Mr. Bolton) received from the right hon. Gentleman's remarks was that the railway interest was more than fully represented upon it. [Mr. MUNDELLA: No!] He was glad to hear the disclaimer. The right hon. Gentleman said that out of the 27 Members of the Committee nine were Railway Directors; but the fact was that only seven of its Members were Railway Directors, and his (Mr. Bolton's) pecuniary interest as a Member of the Commission was not less than ten times as great as a trader as his pecuniary interest as a railway shareholder; indeed, two of the Railway Directors who sat on it were more traders than railway shareholders. The right hon. Gentleman, when the other night he indicated that seven railway men were more than a match for 20 traders, paid the former an undeserved compliment. The result was due to the facts which they had before them, and were able to prove to the other Members of the Committee. What were the grounds for this legislation? The President of the Board of Trade said he was overwhelmed with complaints of unfair and unreasonable charges, and in some instances he called them exasperating charges. But the Committee of 1881-2 had to deal with similar exasperating charges, and after listening to and examining all the complaints which could be brought before them, they declared that some specific instances of overcharge appeared to have been established, but on the whole of the evidence they acquitted the Railway Companies of any grave dereliction of their duty to the public. The number of transactions which were included in a year's business of the Railway Companies of this country, the revenue of which was some £60,000,000, rendered it a certainty that at some time or other during the year there would be improprieties committed. The Committee of 1881-2 also reported that no witnesses appeared to complain of undue preferences to individuals, such as were frequent during the years preceding the Act of 1854. Did that not speak volumes for the management of the railways? The right hon. Gentleman had said he was overwhelmed with evidence of inequality; but with one exception he gave no instances by which they could test the correctness of these charges. The case he mentioned was the charge for the carriage of fish from Wick to London. The distance between the two places was 750 miles, and the charge by the quickest train for fish was 3-8ths of a penny per lb. Was there anything exorbitant in such a charge for such a distance and at such a speed? His right hon. Friend referred also to foreign traffic, and he might say that there was no secret about the special rates granted in 1877 for foreign traffic. It was a fair question whether it was in the interest of the country at large or not that these special provisions in favour of foreign traffic should continue, and that was a question, he respectfully submitted, that this House at the present moment was not in a position to judge of. But there was an immense amount made of this traffic, which was of no value at all. He could not speak so well of the Newcastle traffic; but he could speak of the traffic in Scotland, where it was said they had been grave offenders. They had carried American cattle or beef from Glasgow to London at little more than half the price which their rate-books showed was to be charged for home-grown beef. But they were well convinced that there was no home-grown beef to be carried from Glasgow to London. The rate for this American beef from Glasgow to London was merely part of the through rate from New York to London, and whether the meat went direct to London or *vid* the Clyde made no difference to the Glasgow grower of meat. But they were well convinced that there was no home-grown meat seeking transport from Glasgow to London, and they put it to the test. From the 1st of April or the end of March they determined to have only one rate for the conveyance of meat from the Clyde to London, and they made that rate the same as that which had hitherto been charged for American meat. The result was that 83 tons of American beef, in lots of 30, 20, and 29 tons, were sent to London, while only 2 tons 2 cwt. 3 qrs. of home-grown meat were forwarded. The special rate of 45*s.* was only charged for lots of one ton, and there had not been one single lot of home-grown meat sent at this rate, the whole of it having been sent in lots of 4 or 5 cwts. His hon. Friend the Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) had told the House that the Caledonian Company, of which he (Mr. Bolton) was the Chairman, had ill-treated the traders of Dundee, inasmuch as they had run off by low charges a steamer which was trading between Dundee and Glasgow, and had then advanced the rates. His hon. Friend also stated that the Caledonian Company had also made the shipping rate from Dundee to Glasgow so low that Dundee merchants were able to send their goods to Glasgow and to New York *vid* Liverpool cheaper than if they sent them direct. His hon. Friend promised him some clue by which he might examine the correctness of his statement; but he was sorry to say he had not done so. He had, however, made inquiries, and he could not find that at any time a steamer was plying between Dundee and Glasgow, and if no steamer ever plied he presumed no railway could ever run it off the route. There was no justification for these reflections. The fact was that freights from New York appeared to have reached their lowest point. In some cases pig iron was carried free, and corn was brought both to Glasgow and Liverpool for nothing. With reference to an observation by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, that liberal results followed a liberal policy, he wished to remind him that before the Midland Railway Company abolished their second and reduced their first-class fares, a small Company with which he was connected had already done the same wherever they were able to act for themselves. He had always been an advocate of low opposed to high rates, and he entirely approved of the action of the Midland Company; but they all knew that this "liberal policy" had not been approved of by Railway Managers. There was no question more disputed, and there was this certain, that a "liberal result" had not always followed a "liberal policy." The dividend paid by the Midland at the time they made the change was higher than it had ever been since. Where, then, was the "liberal result" of the "liberal policy?" Then they were told that they were to be kept out of evil by a Board of Conciliation—that was to say, the Board of Trade was to act as the go-between. They were told by the President of the Board of Trade that the Railway Commission in America, which was somewhat similar to the Railway Commission established in this country, had been very successful, and that the Boards of Conciliation had also been very successful. His (Mr. Bolton's) information did not entirely agree with that of the right hon. Gentleman. He found that in the State of Iowa the attempt to regulate the rates had led to a cessation of railway construction and the withdrawal of capital from the State. In New York he found that it was asked that the Board of Conciliation should have some means of compelling the railways where there was no conciliation. The result of the Bill, if it became law, would be that Railway Directors and Managers would be kept in such a continual state of harassment and hot water that their life would be one which no one would voluntarily undertake to live. No escape was provided for them by the Bill. Clause 24, which he thought was the most important clause in the Bill, provided that the maximum charges should be revised if they were found to be excessive. Even though they happened to be excessive at one time it did not follow that they would always be excessive, and the Board of Trade would have nothing to guide their action except the complaints of traders who thought they were being overcharged. It was said that the Board of Trade would not listen to frivolous complaints. But how were they to know that they would be so? Complaints were frivolous when they had been examined and found to have no foundation. They had, however, no guarantee that complaints which were in reality frivolous would be so considered by the Board of Trade, and it would be necessary for every Railway Company to keep a staff who would have nothing to do but to meet these so-called complaints. He had much more to say, but, owing to a severe cold and hoarseness, he could not complete his task. He would simply add, in conclusion, that the Railway Companies had no desire to shirk this Bill. They desired to have this matter settled, but they desired to have it settled on reasonable and equitable terms, and not in accordance with the terms which this Bill proposed in these clauses. The clauses to which he had been referring they must oppose to the utmost, because they believed that if they were carried as they stood they would have confiscation—neither more nor less. There were many other matters which they must also oppose; but they were quite willing to trust them to the Committee, where they would be able to state their case, and he believed convince hon. Members of its justness when they had stated their case. It would be for the House, in its wisdom, to decide whether or not the policy on which the Railway Companies had been carrying on their business was in the interest of the people of this country or to their disadvantage.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "while this House desires legislation with the object of securing uniformity of classification for merchandise conveyed by Railway, the consolidation of the toll powers of Railway Companies, and such other modifications of the existing law as experience has shown to be useful and necessary, including the establishment of a strong and permanent Court with special powers over Railways and Canals, it is not prepared to sanction any compulsory interference with or diminution of those powers of earning revenue granted by Parliament to Railway Companies upon the faith of which eight hundred millions of capital have been expended, and upon which the security of that capital depends,"—(*Mr. Joseph Bolton,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. E. STANHOPE (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) said, that the concluding words of the speech of the hon. Member, which was evidently delivered under great physical difficulties, encouraged him to hope that the hon. Member did not intend to press his Amendment to a division. He believed, speaking in the interest of the object which the Railway Companies desired to attain, that to take a division on that Amendment at the present stage of the Bill would completely defeat that object. The hon. Member approved of the greater part of the Bill, while objecting to one or two clauses of it; and a division taken on the Amendment would raise a false issue, and convey to the country an erroneous view of the opinion of Parliament on the subject. He regretted that he was unable to be present when the right hon. Gentleman opposite introduced this Bill. He was especially sorry that he was not able at the time to express his sense of the fairness with which he had brought the matter under their notice. The position of the President of the Board of Trade was an exceedingly delicate and difficult one. He could not hope to please both the traders and the Railway Companies, and the only resource open to him was to endeavour to steer his course in a way consistent with justice and sound principle. In the speech of the right hon. Gentleman he detected—as far as he could judge from reading it—every desire to comply with that principle which he had just laid down. He himself, so far as he had any personal interest, approached the Bill, not from the view of a trader, but rather from the view of a railway shareholder. It seemed to him that, at the present time, shareholders and traders both had cause to complain of the existing state of things. The traders had causes of complaint, many of which he had no hesitation in saying were legitimate causes of complaint. But, besides that, hon. Members knew the circumstances in which the trade of the country had been carried on for the last few years. It was no wonder, therefore, that the traders, finding that no profit was derived from their business, should endeavour, in the strongest possible way, to secure some relief from the difficulties under which they were placed. The Railway Companies also had good cause to complain of the present state of things. He was persuaded that the Companies, knowing that they possessed a monopoly, were prepared to submit to those just restrictions which the wisdom of Parliament and the interests of the country might desire to impose upon them. On the other hand, they had an absolute right to call on Parliament to take care that there should be no interference with the responsibility of the Directors in carrying on their affairs, and no interference with the just rights conferred upon them by Parliament. They also had a right to say that the tribunal to which questions affecting them were to be intrusted should be one which should command their confidence. In his opinion, what was wanted in this matter was a tribunal which should be cheap, convenient, efficient, and accessible. First of all, it ought to be accessible and cheap; and he believed the President of the Board of Trade would agree with him that, if it was to be cheap, it must not sit at Westminster —[Mr. MUNDELLA: Hear, hear!]— where the atmosphere was impregnated with the traditions as to large counsel fees before Private Bill Committees. He did not wish to prevent eminent counsel from appearing before the Court; but he should like these cases to be determined in some place nearer the Temple, where people who did not want to pay heavy fees could pay moderate fees; and this result could only be achieved if the Court no longer sat at Westminster. He hoped that care would also be taken to regulate the procedure of the Court. It would not do to give the Court general power to sit where it liked; but it might be desirable to lay down instructions as to the conditions under which it should sit locally. There were many cases where it might be desirable to hold a local inquiry, and the rules of the Court ought to be sufficiently flexible to enable it to detach one of its members to take evidence locally. For the same reason he objected to multiplication of appeals. He was glad to see that there was in the Bill some restriction on appeals, and it might be well to go a step farther, since the Court was to be a strong one, in which the legal element was adequately represented, and make the decision of the Court of Appeal final, without any right of recourse to the House of Lords. The present Court would require to be reconstituted. He did not desire to depreciate the services rendered by the three distinguished gentlemen who now constituted the Railway Commission. They entered upon their duties at an exceedingly difficult time, and they had to create the procedure of their Court under circumstances of great opposition. Traders and the community generally, and even Railway Companies, were indebted to them for the manner in which they had discharged their duties. But the time had come when, as its powers were about to be largely extended, and looking to the importance of the cases which were likely to come before the Commission, and the eminence of counsel habitually retained in such cases, the Commission required to be strengthened and reconstituted, and, above all, it required to have a legal Chief Commissioner. Appeals would thereby be diminished, and greater confidence would be placed in its decisions. But then he parted company with the Government. The Bill proposed that the Chief Commissioner should be a Judge of the High Court, selected from time to time by the Lord Chancellor in England, and the Court of Session in Scotland. He was, however, strongly of opinion that it was desirable to have a special legal Chief of the Commission, and not different Judges at different times appointed *ad hoc*, for besides legal points, questions would arise involving a knowledge of railway management and railway business, and it was important not only to have a good lawyer, but a man who would devote his time to the study of questions of this kind. It was suggested that it would be well to ask one of the present Judges to accept the Chief Commissionership; but he had come to the conclusion that on the whole the best thing would be to adhere to the present constitution of the Commission, and have a man of legal attainments who would give his whole time to the work. It might be urged that this would involve great waste of time, as there was not enough work to keep the Commission occupied all the year. But the time was coming when Private Bill business would no longer be done by Parliamentary Committees, but by some outside body, and it would be well if, in any appointments that might be made to this Commission, the right was reserved of casting upon the Commissioners the duty of taking their share in any business of this kind that Parliament might think fit to commit to them. It was proposed by the Bill to extend the jurisdiction of the Commissioners in various directions, and on most of these points hon. Members would be all agreed. Many of these extensions of jurisdiction had been long recommended; but some were still open to controversy, and among the latter was that relating to the rates and charges of Railway Companies, to which the hon. Gentleman opposite had devoted the greater part of his speech. Supporting the President of the Board of Trade, as he did, to a large extent in his views with regard to this Bill, there was one thing to which he must take exception. The right hon. Gentleman, as soon as he found that certain clauses were not palatable to the Railway Companies, appeared to have resorted to the plan of stating that they were all the work of his Predecessors. Now, that was most objectionable.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside) said, that was not quite correct. When the deputation waited upon him and spoke of the statesmanlike character of the Bill, he felt that he could not honestly accept credit for the work of his Predecessor, and so he stated that the Bill was not the work of one side of the House, and that there was scarcely an operative clause for which he was not indebted to the right hon. Gentleman opposite.

MR. E. STANHOPE: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would allow him to conclude what he was going to say. The right hon. Gentleman stated that all the clauses which affected Railway Companies were practically the work of his Predecessors.

MR. MUNDELLA: No, no.

MR. E. STANHOPE said, he had the right hon. Gentleman's words as they were reported. The late Government never presented any Bill on this subject to Parliament; and, so far as he knew, the late Cabinet never agreed to the provisions of any Bill whatever on the subject. This was not a question affecting the government of Ireland, and therefore the Members of a Cabinet might be allowed to have independent opinions upon it. But if this style of argument was going to be pursued, there would be an end to that confidence between the Members of an outgoing and the Members of an incoming Government which had hitherto been of so satisfactory a character. He had to complain that confidential memoranda of his, marked as confidential, had been shown by the right hon. Gentleman to people outside the Department in order to prove that he (Mr. Stanhope) was in favour of certain proposals

Mr. MUNDELLA: I beg pardon.

Mr. E. STANHOPE: To the deputation from the Railway Companies?

Mr. MUNDELLA: No; certainly not.

Mr. E. STANHOPE said, that his assertion was that this deputation were shown his confidential memoranda without his leave, and he would venture to say such a thing had never occurred before in the history of the relations of the two Parties. But he passed from that personal matter to state the manner in which he had approached the question. When he left Office he was on the point of receiving a deputation on the subject, representing both traders and Railway Companies, and there were three points with regard to jurisdiction brought under his notice—first, the classification of rates; secondly, terminal charges; and, thirdly, undue preference. He felt that in regard to the classification of rates there was the strongest ground of complaint on the part of the traders, who desired a simple and uniform classification, which, indeed, the Railway Companies were not unwilling to grant. It was recommended by Mr. Ashley's Committee to the House. Everyone must see its primary importance. That Railway Companies should have the means by alteration of the classification to increase their rates was a matter that required very watchful attention. But if there was to be uniform classification of rates, how was it to be achieved? This must be left to some tribunal like the Commission that would be able to deal with rates on a uniform system. With regard to the question of terminal charges, he thought that no one would deny that it was in an utterly unsatisfactory condition. He believed that there was litigation pending with regard to some of these terminal charges. Not that it mattered very much which way it was decided, since, in his opinion, the present condition of terminal charges was unjust to both parties. On the one hand, there was no doubt that there were many cases in which the Railway Companies did not receive that adequate remuneration for the services which they had rendered to which they were justly entitled; while, on the other hand, it would be absolutely monstrous, if the Companies were enabled universally to levy terminal charges in addition to the maximum rate permitted. The House would also recollect that in the case of many of the Companies there was considerable doubt whether they could levy any terminal charges at all. Under these circumstances, he was confident that the House would agree with him that it was absolutely necessary that some power should be taken to control and regulate this possibly enormous addition to the charges of the trading community. The direction in which it had seemed to him that that regulation should proceed was that there should be a judicial tribunal, and it had been his own intention to have made such a proposal. Some hon. Members thought that Parliament itself was perfectly competent to deal with this matter, because in the case of every Railway Bill it was open to Parliament to review the conditions of the contract. In his opinion, this was altogether inadequate to meet the necessities of the case; and if they wished to deal with these terminal charges at all they must be brought before a judicial tribunal. Under the Act of 1873 the Railway Commissioners had at the present moment in the case of terminal charges power to declare what were reasonable charges. He would have liked to have seen that power largely extended, and the Railway Commissioners allowed, after hearing both parties, to deal with the matter in the way that they thought satisfactory to the Companies and to the traders. But the proposal of Her Majesty's Government was very different. They had adopted the method of calling in, not the Railway Commissioners, but a Department of the Board of Trade, who were to draw up a scheme for the purpose of regulating the classification of rates and charges, and also of dealing with maximum rates and terminals. He had the strongest objections to that proposal. He would be the last, for his own part, to say anything against the present officials of the Board of Trade. These officials had again and again had to perform very responsible and in many cases novel duties, and had done so with satisfaction; but he objected to their being employed in this matter, because, in the first place, they had no real acquaintance with the details of railway management and were unqualified to lay down such charges; and, in the second place, they were not the proper body to deal with the matter; they were not a judicial body. If the Board of Trade was to decide these questions, what became of the Board of Conciliation? The 28th clause had a direct bearing upon this question. He would look hopefully upon the action of this clause; in his opinion, that was all that anyone could do. But it seemed to him to be killed by the 24th clause. For these reasons he hoped that the House would pause before it intrusted the Board of Trade with any such powers as were suggested. With regard to the question of undue preference to foreign goods, that was actually the centre of the conflict. In some cases where these rates were levied the Railway Companies did get sufficient advantage from them to make it worth their while to continue them; and he was sure that whatever happened there would continue to be an agitation, and in many cases a just agitation, against them. They had seen that there had been many meetings with regard to this matter held on behalf of the Railway Companies. He regretted deeply that the first opportunity had not been taken of saying that by some joint arrangement among the Companies themselves after a reasonable time this undue preference to foreign goods should cease. If it were gradually abandoned he was sure that all acerbity would come to an end, and the question would be settled upon a basis just and generous to all parties. He was glad that the Government did not propose substantially to alter the Act of 1854, which laid down in the clearest possible terms the law as to undue preference. All that that Act wanted was that it should be boldly and justly administered by a competent tribunal. From what he had said the House would readily understand that he was going cordially to support the second reading of this Bill, and he hoped that it would be read a second time without a division. Looking at the aspect of affairs in general, there was considerable risk to the Bill, and he earnestly hoped that the Government would lose no time in pressing it forward in Committee. There could not be a greater evil for Railway Companies and for traders than that a matter of this character should remain open after having been once raised, and they should endeavour that it should be settled as soon as possible with justice to all parties.

Mr. MAGNIAC (Bedford, N., Biggleswade) said, he must congratulate the Railway Companies on the change in their front as shown by the Amendment of his hon. Friend. He thought, however, that a good deal of the language which had been used as to confiscation and robbery in connection with this Bill was to be regretted. This subject was one of great importance to the large class of market gardeners, who, in many cases, felt that upon this Bill depended the continuance of their income. The right of Parliament to deal with this question had been contested by an hon. Member; he had not gone quite so far as some of the legal gentleman; but he thought on this point some confusion had arisen, particularly as to the Act of 1844. The days of buying up railways on the expectation that they would pay 10 per cent had now passed away; but the right of Parliament to interfere was beyond all doubt. This point was always raised when any monopoly was attacked. It had been truly said by a well-known writer in *The Times*, who signed himself "B," that no Act of Parliament could bind any subsequent Act, and one Parliament could not bind a future Parliament. The railways had taken their Acts with all their contingent liabilities. There was one very important principle in the Bill upon which he wished to make a few remarks, and as to which Lord Grimthorpe had helped him, although perhaps he did not intend it. The noble Lord said that by the Railway Clauses Act—Clause 86—it was provided that rates must not only not exceed the maximum, they must be reasonable. In dealing with undue preference, they would find that clause of the greatest value. It was a safe rock on which to stand. The complaint of the traders and agriculturists was not that the maximum rates were exceeded by the Companies; the complaint was that the Companies charged differential, preferential, and secret rates. That was the *gravamen* of the charge. The law ought to be perfectly simple and clear, and if any blame fell on anyone it should not be on the Court but on that House for not framing the Act clearly. He did not know that a lawyer was required on the Court—he meant absolutely necessary. He would admit that, in deference to public opinion, it would be better that they should have one lawyer; but what he did deprecate in the strongest manner was that provision in the Bill which made two non-legal members of the Court dummies sitting alongside the lawyer. He did not know why there should be this difference. He thought a tribute was due to Sir Frederick Peel and Mr. Price, who had discharged the business with an extraordinary degree of success. He did not understand there was any complaint against them by the public or the Companies, although, as to the latter, sometimes complaints were heard. [" No ! "] Well, some hon. Members in that House attended meetings, and could judge for themselves. They knew that Railway Companies revelled in law proceedings. [" Oh ! "] If a Director would stand up and declare the total spent in law proceedings it would be frightful. When one knew the enormous sums that were spent by Railway Companies in this way he was irresistibly driven to the conclusion that there must be something wrong, and he was glad to think that the Bill would put a stop to that state of things. After all, who was it wanted a double appeal? It was not the traders at all. He contended most strongly that one appeal was ample. There was a most excellent provision in the Bill, and that was the provision for transferring rating cases to the Railway Commission, although he thought that the proposal might be improved by allowing the Court to make the final order instead of referring it back to Quarter Sessions. As to the classification of rates, the traders contended that they did not know what rate they had to pay for their goods, or what other people paid, and the consequence was they had no protection whatever against unreasonable and preferential charges. The Chairman of the London and North-Western Company the other day informed the shareholders that they had rates for dealing with 2,000 articles, and that they had a list of 20,000,000 of rates applicable to goods carried by this one railway alone. That was an answer to the question of the hon. Member for Stirlingshire, " Why they wanted legislation ? " He defied any man to find out beforehand in 20,000,000 of items what the rate was for any goods he might have to send. And that might be multiplied indefinitely for every railway in the Kingdom. Although the interest of the traders was so paramount, he thought some means of accommodation might be found with the Companies. In his opinion it was not absolutely necessary that the Board of Trade should fix the rates. That was one of the points objected to by the Railway Companies, and he believed upon that point agreement could be come to. He did not see how, without some better indication of the principles which should guide the Commissioners, they could fix the rates and terminals. He thought there should also be some term stated within which the rates should remain unchanged and untouched. The most important part of the Bill, in his view, was the 2nd section of Clause 25, referring to preferential rates. That seemed to involve the whole case of the traders; and he felt certain that if the words of that clause were retained they had much better have no Bill at all. He believed that the law as it stood was amply sufficient to cover any cases that might possibly arise; and he hoped the Government would consent to expunge the 25th clause, in order that the law might not be altered to the great detriment of traders and agriculturists. In the Conciliation Clause he took a strong and even a paternal interest. The principle of that clause was established in 1881 when the London Chamber of Commerce was founded; one of the principal objects of its formation being to promote arbitration in trading disputes. The application of that principle had been attended with considerable success. Several cases had been decided at a cost which to a lawyer or a Railway Director would appear ludicrous. At a cost of £28 13*s.* 8*d.* a case was decided where an enormous sum of money was at stake and a principle of considerable importance involved, and the outcome of the matter was that in the City there was a list of 400 or 500 traders who were at hand ready to deal with cases of arbitration and conciliation. Public opinion, he believed, would do a great deal more than law in these railway disputes. Only within the last few weeks the Directors of several Railway Companies had met a considerable number of traders in the part of the world in which he lived, and had been endeavouring to ameliorate their respective relations. He did not say that that was *propter hoc* because *post hoc,* but it was a curious coincidence that the printing of this Bill should have been followed in so striking a way by the conferences he had alluded to. Turning to the provisions relating to canals, he observed that canals formed a considerable part and represented a considerable share of the £800,000,000 of capital about which Railway Directors were in a state of so much concern at present. A great deal of that money had been spent in buying up canals. What for? For the benefit of the public? Not a bit of it. These had been bought up for the purpose of shutting them up to evade competition. That was not a proper state of things. The difficulty existed in other countries, where it arose, not as in England from the disuse of canals, but from their absence. In France a Commission of Inquiry had recently been sitting, which recommended the construction of canals in connection with the Loire, Rhone, and other rivers. He trusted that the Railway Companies would meet traders and agriculturists in a fair spirit; and he was sure that if the Companies accepted the Bill and treated their customers in a reasonable spirit, their own interests would be served as well as those of the community, and something might be done to arrest the decline now unhappily going on of our commerce and agriculture.

Mr. HICKMAN (Wolverhampton, W.), in supporting the second reading of the Bill, said, that it was in the interest of both parties that some settlement of the present difficulties between the Railway Companies and the traders should be come to. It could not be to the interest of the Railway Companies that their customers should feel that they were oppressed and unjustly treated. It was intended when great powers were given to Railway Companies that there should be maximum rates which the Companies should not go beyond; and the words of the principal Acts were "including every expense incidental to conveyance." But it had been held that these maximum rates did not include stations or the salaries of clerks engaged in the conduct of the traffic. The question of what should be covered by the maximum rates should be settled both in the interest of the Railway Companies and of the traders. It was not right that Railway Companies should be able to charge three or four times their maximum rates in respect of their provision of stations and clerks. The question of terminals ought to be settled, and this Bill provided an excellent tribunal for the purpose. The Railway Directors and shareholders said that this meant confiscation. But if they had got a good case why should they be afraid of submitting it to an impartial tribunal? What tribunal could be fairer than that to which the schedule of rates would be presented under this Bill? Why, the rates would in the last resort be submitted to that House, and decided upon by it; and it could not be supposed that that House would do anything unfair. Then there was the question of undue preference. The hon. Member for Stirlingshire had said that there was no longer any undue preference as regarded individuals. But what traders complained of was not undue preference as between individuals, but as between one district and another. Take, for instance, the action of the Midland Railway Company. They carried coke from Staveley to Northamptonshire—a distance of 84 miles—for 3*s.* 4*d.* a-ton, while they charged 3*s.* 10*d.* for carrying it from Staveley to Wolverhampton—a distance of only 65 miles—so that the rate, which should only be 2*s.* 10*d.*, if the coke was carried at the same rate as from Staveley to Northamptonshire, was really 1*s.* a-ton more than it ought to be. This difference of 1*s.* a-ton made all the difference between profit and loss to the traders. Nor was this a solitary case; there were a great number of other cases in which the rates from Wolverhampton to London and other points were proportionately much larger than the rates charged between other places and the same destinations. This Bill would, he believed, provide a means for preventing this injustice being done to the district he represented; nor was this Bill only for the good of traders, but it was for the good of Railway Companies as well, for at present Railway Companies were in many cases unable to reduce rates when they wished in consequence of the combinations and confederations into which they had entered with other Companies. An instance of this was afforded by the inability of the Midland Railway Company to reduce their South Staffordshire rates in fulfilment of the promises they had made before obtaining access to the district. The only real competition between railways now was as to the passenger traffic. According to the London and North - Western Company, their passenger traffic paid 4*s.* 4*d.* per ton per train mile, while their goods traffic paid 6*s.* 6*d.* per ton per train mile; and in a recent case a Railway Company proposed to charge a constituent of his at the rate of 7*s.* 3*d.* per ton per train mile for sending two truck loads of goods from Wolverhampton to London—or at nearly double the rate charged for a whole passenger train. Railway Companies could not be surprised if traders, under these circumstances, felt sore; and it was their interest in the long run to meet the traders before an impartial tribunal, when the case on both sides might be fully considered. No doubt, the Bill might require some amendment; but, on the whole, it was a most able, impartial, and statesmanlike effort to deal with a most difficult question, and he appealed with confidence to the House to pass it by a large majority.

MR. JACKS (Leith, &c.) said, he rose for the purpose of supporting the Bill as a trader. He was sure, seeing that so much of their railway legislation was almost ancient history, it was positively refreshing to get a practical measure brought forward to deal with the evils of which traders so justly complained. The hon. Member for Stirlingshire (Mr. J. C. Bolton) referred, in sitting down, to the exasperating cases of which the President of the Board of Trade complained. He (Mr. Jacks) would take the liberty of pointing out to the right hon. Gentleman that if he could see his way to insert a clause or make provision in the Bill to compel the Railway Companies to make a return of a ton per mile rate, the same as was made in every country in the world except our own, it would do away with these exasperations, because it would enable the trader not only to judge between the rate which he paid to his railway and the rate which was charged by other railways, but also to form a comparison between the rates charged by British railways and those charged by railways on the Continent. The advantage would be not only to the trader, but also to the Railway Companies, because it would enable them to control their expenditure; and, he was bound to say, a provision could be made and carried out without any expense, because he felt sure there was no competent railway manager in Great Britain who had not the information in some form or other. His hon. Friend the Member for Stirlingshire said very strongly that the interests of the Railway Companies were the interests of the traders. As a matter of sentiment, he supposed there was no one in this House who did not agree with him; but how did it come out in practice? Was the hon. Gentleman aware that while 12 years ago the minerals of this country paid 16 per cent of their cost, now they paid 24 per cent? He knew the reply the hon. Gentleman suggested. It was the fall of the prices. But, he would ask, whilst raw material had fallen something like three times—take the case of iron and heavy articles—how had the rates varied? Twelve years ago the rates were 23 pence per mile; now the cost was 21·1 pence—a difference of 8 per cent, as compared with between 300 and 400 per cent. He could quite understand the reply of Gentlemen connected with the railway interest. It was, where is the dividend to come from? In his opinion, the cause of these rates was the excessive cost of British railways as compared with the railways of other countries. Ten years ago British railways cost £34,000 per mile on the average. Now they cost £42,000 per mile. What had they got to show for that as compared, for instance, with the United States, which 10 years ago cost £9,000 per mile, as compared with £12,000 per mile now? Or France, where the respective costs were £30,000 per mile and £27,000 per mile? The difference was easily explained if they looked at the extravagant way in which he thought the railways in Great Britain were managed. He would refer to one glaring case. They would find an illustration in the Devonshire Report of the enormous sums that were paid by railways for creating money, and that was the London, Chatham, and Dover Company, which in order to raise £16,000,000 had to pay £3,000,000. There were other instances equally glaring. Then there was another cause, and that was that from being carriers the Railway Companies had greatly changed their character and become hotel-keepers. Taking one of the best managed Railway Companies in the Kingdom, the North Eastern, they found a large hotel put up at York, at an expense of £250,000, which only paid 1 per cent on the hotel itself. That had naturally to be spread over the workings of the Company. What he had risen chiefly to emphasize was the question raised by the hon. Member for Bedfordshire (Mr. Magniac)—the question of canals. In this country there were about 2,430 miles of canals, of which there was known to be in the possession of the Railway Companies nearly 1,700 miles, altogether independent of the mileage which they controlled. How were these canals used? They were not used at all. In France there were 3,500 miles of canals, upon which £30,000,000 had been spent, and a Commission appointed by the Chamber of Deputies reported some five years ago to the effect that they found it was utterly impossible to carry on the trade and commerce in France without canals, because the rate per ton per mile by railway was something like double that by canals. The experience in the use of canals in the United States was of a somewhat similar kind; and in France there had been the practical outcome that a few years ago the Government voted £40,000,000 to create and develop new canals. That was a very different policy from the policy pursued by the English Railway Companies, who spent money to buy up canals, not to work them. The consequence was that for the money spent by the Railway Companies in buying the canals dividend had to be provided out of the legitimate railway traffic. The amount of money invested in British canals was nearly £60,000,000. No one knew what the Railway Companies had paid for the canals which they bought; but, taking it at the proportion of what they held, it would be about £20,000,000, and upon that sum no dividend was paid from the working of the canals, but had to be provided out of the working of the railway traffic. The next point, he thought, was a very serious one for traders. It was, that during the last 12 or 15 years the gross earnings of Railway Companies had increased by 20 per cent. Shareholders knew pretty well that the dividends had not increased in anything like that ratio. But where had the money gone to? To accommodate the public, said the hon. Baronet the Member for Durham (Sir Joseph Pease). But they accommodated the public in the United States of America, and they did not pay anything like the same amount of money. The increased cost was only £3,000 as against £8,000, and the proportion was increasing every day. Therefore he thought the traders as represented in this House ought to do everything they could to facilitate the passing of this Bill, which seemed to be the only practical and real effort that had been made for some time to grapple with this question. He would respectfully press on the President of the Board of Trade to endeavour to give effect, and useful effect, to these two points—namely, to have a ton per mile rate on the material that was carried over the railways for the purposes he had named, and to see that the canals were so used that traders could have access to their rates the same as they could have to the railways; and, if necessary, he would almost say, the Government might themselves interfere and buy up the canals. He did not forget the lecture they got from the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to proposing votes of money, but he would very respectfully submit that this was not a waste of money; but an investment. With all deference to the present and past Governments, he thought the House had been asked, and very probably might be asked at some future time, to make investments which would not be so good as these canals, besides the enormous benefit and gain to the British manufacturer and trader in assisting them in the difficult and tremendous task now laid upon them of competing with those nations which brought all these natural characteristics of their country into play.

Sir R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton) said, he did not think he should have intervened only that with one exception he was the only Member of the Joint Committee of the Lords and Commons which sat in 1872 who was now a Member of that House. In that capacity he wished to state how very much he sympathized with those who had spoken about the canals, because that was a question which was brought before the Committee, and no Committee was ever more unanimous in its recommendations on the subject. One of the most important of those recommendations was that, except in special circumstances, no canal from that time should be allowed to be bought by a Railway Company. The result was, unhappily, not what they expected, because he believed that hardly any Committee which had the matter brought before them ever paid any attention to it, but allowed the canals to be bought up as they had been bought up before. He was one of those who thought that the interests of the Railway Companies and of the traders ought to be considered identical. The Companies would act wisely if they were to reduce the rates so low that they would not be felt to be oppressive, and traders would do well not to be unreasonable in their demands. Those engaged in the mining interest, for example, were looking round to see how they could benefit themselves; and no doubt some things which they recommended would have that effect, but not all. One point was to get rid of royalties paid to the landlords. He had received deputations himself on the subject. He did not mean to get rid of royalties altogether, but to diminish them. It was said that these royalties were fixed at the time when the mining industry was prosperous, and when the owners of the soil could get anything they asked for, but that the times had changed, and therefore some alteration should be made in the matter of royalties. The traders in the same way said that if they could get their goods carried at a less rate they would make more profit. He should be very glad to see this question properly settled, and he quite agreed with many of the points raised by his right hon. Friend the late President of the Board of Trade. He thought that these questions of undue preference were altogether wrong. There was a great deal of misrepresentation in the country upon the subject, which in his opinion ought to be settled by an independent tribunal. He quite agreed with his right hon. Friend in what he said about maximum rates and charges. The settlement of maximum rates and charges by such a Department as the Board of Trade would not prove satisfactory. He did not think it was the province of a Government Department to undertake any such duty, and so strongly did he object to the clause that dealt with the point that he would rather not see the Bill carried if the Government retained the clause. He did not think that sufficient stress had been laid upon the question as to what were the fair rights of the Railway Companies. This was not a new question. The matter had been sifted before Committees over and over again, and they should bear in mind what those Committee had reported and the language they had used. The Report of the Committees of 1844, of 1855, 1856, and 1857 with regard to the rights and privileges of the Railway Companies ought to be present to the minds of hon. Members when they came to deal with a question of this kind. He also urged that the Report of the Joint Committee of the Lords and Commons in 1872 upon this subject should be considered in connection with this Bill. It was proposed to transfer the settlement of the question of maximum rates to the Board of Trade; but he should like to know on what principle the settlement was to be brought about, and by whom? He saw nothing to guide the advisers in this matter. What the right hon. Gentleman wanted to do was, in order to satisfy the traders, to cut down the maximum charges of the Railway Companies. This, he submitted, would not only not benefit the traders, but it would at the same time shake the confidence of those who had invested their money in railways. He would assume that Clause 24 as it now stood had been placed in the original Acts of the great Railway Companies. That was to say that, although there was a miximum rate fixed, it was to be subject to the revision of the Board of Trade in five, 10, or 15 years. If such a provision as that had been placed in the original Acts of the Railway Companies he should like to know how much of the £800,000,000 now invested in railways would ever have been subscribed? By adopting this clause the House would be placing a large amount of capital in a different position to what it was before. He was perfectly willing to extend the powers of the Court of Commissioners and to put that body on a much better footing; but all these questions of undue preference should be relegated to some competent tribunal, but not to the Board of Trade. He thought the Board of Trade was the most incompetent tribunal that could possibly deal with such a matter. That Board was not qualified for doing it; it had not the practical or legal knowledge, and it had not the officers who could do it. [Mr. Mundella: Who has?] It was for the right hon. Gentleman to discover that. At all events, there must be some person of legal knowledge in the tribunal that had to do with such an amount of property. He was quite certain that it was for the interests of the traders and the Railway Companies that they should meet each other half-way, because their interests were identical. The Railway Companies had in these times of distress lowered their rates in a great number of cases in order to meet the pressure put upon their customers, and on the other hand the traders were perfectly willing that the rates should be raised in better times. He was ready to do anything in his power to remove any friction that might exist; but he should be sorry to create any ill-feeling by passing a measure containing such a clause as that to which he had referred.

Mr. JOHNSON-FERGUSON (Leicester, Loughborough) said, that the prevailing opinion in the House seemed to be that some legislation was necessary; and, therefore, the most useful thing to do was to point out what appeared to be defects in the Bill, in the hope that the President of the Board of Trade would be able to see his way to devise a remedy for those defects in Committee. He recognized in the Bill an immense advance upon the Acts of 1854 and 1873. The first defect that occurred to him, on glancing through the Bill, was that on questions of the legality of tolls, rates, and charges, there was to be an appeal from the decision of the Commissioners. Hence a fruitful source of contention would be opened, for experience showed that Railway Companies would always exercise their right of appeal where such existed, and carry their disputes to every Court to which it was possible for them to appeal, and, in the position in which Directors stood as trustees for the shareholders, perhaps they were bound to do so; but he wished that in Committee the right hon. Gentleman would see his way to include this question of legality of tolls, rates, and charges, with those other two classes of questions upon which the decison of the Commissioners would be final. Another point was the difficulty of obtaining through rates from Railway Companies. He knew of instances where repeated applications for through rates had been refused for years, and in one instance they had been refused altogether, to the considerable inconvenience of traders. By the Act of 1873 one Railway Company had the right to demand a through rate from another Company over whose lines it wished to send traffic, and could call in the aid of the Commission to enforce the right. Only by a roundabout method could traders obtain through rates; but the trading community would not rest satisfied until it was recognized that they had a right of demanding from two or more Companies whose lines formed direct communication between two places a through rate, and of appealing to the Commission if the demand were refused. On a point in relation to the classification and revised schedule of charges he would draw the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to the immense importance of insisting that terminal charges should be clearly specified. To give one instance where he might give many, he would mention that between two Lancashire towns goods when sent by bleachers were charged 3*s.* per ton, and when sent by manufacturers 7*s.* per ton, and the difference was justified on the ground of its being a terminal charge for work done by the Railway Companies in the case of the manufacturer, but which the bleachers did for themselves. Then he hoped that in the revised schedules the greatest clearness, breadth, and simplicity of classification would be insisted upon to prevent such a confusion as had arisen in regard to the conveyance of wire netting. Between Manchester and Liverpool, while hardware was charged 2¼*d.* per ton per mile, wire netting was charged 4*d.* An ordinary individual would say wire netting was included in the term hardware; but while the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company admitted the classification, the North-Western Company declined to accept that view, and insisted that it should be included in the rates charged for fish, feathers, furniture, and other goods for which they could make an exceptional charge. Then a point upon which he hoped there would be some modification in Committee was the time by which the revised rate would come into operation. Under the Bill it was proposed that Railway Companies should have 12 months from the 1st October next to draw up a schedule of rates and charges and submit it to the Board of Trade. Any objection would be considered, and then when an agreement had been arrived at between the Railway Company and the Board of Trade a Bill was to be brought into the House fixing these as the legal charges for the Company. At the very lowest computation this could not be accomplished under two years. Considering the enormous interests, the fierceness of foreign competition, and the difficulty our trading classes found in successfully meeting that competition, he earnestly hoped the President of the Board of Trade would see his way materially to reduce the time within which these revised charges would come into operation. But the most important objection he had was to Sub-section 2 of Section 25, in reference to the consideration allowed to the Commissioners in deciding whether a lower rate granted to an individual was an undue preference, to consider whether that rate was necessary to secure the traffic in respect to which it was made. He would illustrate the effect of the clause by instances within his knowledge. Taking two seaports where the Railway Companies were competitors with sea carriers—Swansea and Liverpool—he found that the rate for tin plates from Swansea to Liverpool was 12*s*. 6*d*. per ton; but Manchester was 30 miles nearer Swansea than Liverpool, and on the same Midland line, and yet the rate was £1 a-ton. Thus, the Midland Company carried tin plates through Manchester and 30 miles further on for 7*s*. 6*d*. a-ton less than they carried them to Manchester. Then, again, the Midland table of rates at Loughborough Station showed that the Midland Railway carried foreign corn from West Hartlepool at 11*s*. 8*d*., while the rate for English corn was 16*s*. 8*d*. Again, coal from the Leicestershire collieries was carried to King's Lynn for export for 2*s*. 9*d*. per ton, a distance of 106 miles, while the same coal, carried to a town 30 miles distant, on a direct line from the collieries to King's Lynn, paid 3*s*. per ton, and to a place 80 miles distant the charge was 6*s*. 4*d*. per ton. The result was that the coal was absolutely delivered to manufacturers near the seaports in Belgium and Holland at a less charge than it could be delivered to the English competitors of those foreign manufacturers at places situated not much more than one-half the distance from the collieries of even the port of exportation. It seemed to him absolutely necessary that if that clause was to be retained in the Bill it must be modified by some such provision as this—that if the Railway Companies did give exceptionally lower rates than their maximum rates they must not be allowed to charge for a shorter distance on the same line in precisely similar circumstances a higher total charge than the reduced total charge. He thought it was admitted that if this question was to be settled it could only be done by a wide and bold measure; and he certainly congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on the breadth and statesmanlike view he had taken of this question. Hon. Members who were actively engaged in the management of Railway Companies derided and disputed their complaints. He would tell the hon. Member for Stirlingshire that, though he might have disproved the instance given by the hon. Member for Forfarshire, one class of goods was for years carried from Manchester *viâ* Garston and Paris to London at a lower rate than any of the Railway Companies would carry it. On the 1st of January, 1883, the charges for different classes of goods from Manchester to every town in the United Kingdom, with the exception of London and the Hull ports, were arbitrarily advanced without notice being given to the traders interested. The rates were not nominally raised, but the whole of these goods was transferred from one class to another, for which the legal rates were considerably higher. The result was that for months those branches of trade interested in these goods were completely disorganized. Although he believed the Railway Companies had yielded to the representations of the parties engaged in this trade, and had one by one transferred the goods back again to the class in which they originally were, the arbitrary raising of the rates entailed a large amount of inconvenience to, and a very considerable loss on, these traders. With the knowledge of these cases before them, he maintained that they would not be justified in dealing with this question in any other way than in the firm and comprehensive manner in which the President of the Board of Trade had attempted to deal with it. While feeling grateful to him on behalf of the trading community for the introduction of the measure, he sincerely hoped that when they reached Committee the right hon. Gentleman would recognize the importance of the points to which he had drawn particular attention, and that he might be enabled to propose Amendments himself dealing with them or to accept Amendments proposed by others.

Mr. PLUNKET (Dublin University) said, he did not intend to follow the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken into the particular cases referred to. They would more properly be dealt with when they reached Committee, and it would be occupying the time of the House somewhat unnecessarily to endeavour to thresh them at that stage of the proceedings. He desired, therefore, to state the grounds on which he supported the Amendment which had been brought forward by the hon. Member for Stirlingshire (Mr. J. C. Bolton). The position in which he (Mr. Plunket) wished to stand before the House, as being himself a Director of one of the great Railway Companies, was this—they were generally favourable to the Bill. They were sincerely anxious that this question should be settled as soon as possible. It was neither for the advantage of the Railway Companies themselves, nor the public, that these matters should be the subject of perpetual agitation, and therefore they were most anxious to cooperate in every way with any Government which brought forward a Bill with the *bonâ fide* intention of settling the question on an equitable basis. He would say at once that, so far as the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade was concerned, he was sure that that right hon. Gentleman was personally anxious himself to deal with this important subject in this spirit, and that he had shown every possible courtesy to the Railway Companies. He had risen for the purpose of asking the right hon. Gentleman to give them some satisfactory assurance that the parts of the measure to which they most strongly and honestly objected on behalf of the vast number of shareholders of Railway Companies of the Kingdom would be modified. They were certainly as much entitled as any other class in the country to obtain protection for their capital; and, in the great anxiety on the part of the Government to settle this question once for all, their property should not be exposed to what he believed would be the very serious loss to which it would be liable if this Bill were passed in the form in which it now stood. There was a great deal of the Bill of which he most thoroughly approved. For his own part, he was not going to say a word against the Railway Commission as now constituted. He was sure that the Members who composed that Body were able men, who conscientiously performed their duties; but the Commission was appointed some time ago, and the business now was too serious, too grave, and too important, and he was heartily glad to see that, in the Bill, it was proposed to strengthen the Commission. There were many other points on which he thought the provisions of the Bill, with some slight amendment, would produce results for the mutual advantage and benefit both of the public and the Railway Companies. The Amendment of the hon. Member for Stirlingshire, as placed on the Paper, exactly expressed the position which they took up. Their contention was, that this House should not be prepared to sanction any compulsory interference with, or diminution of, those powers of earning revenue granted by Parliament to Railway Companies, and on the faith of which £800,000,000 of capital had been expended, and on which the security of that capital rested. They had been accused of using strong language at the meetings of shareholders which were held to discuss the Bill; but, speaking for himself, he must say that, as the clauses on one or two points stood at present in the Bill, a great deal of that language was perfectly justified. It was complained of as very rash and strong language to say that this Bill, as it stood, might, and probably would, mean confiscation; but if they took two or three provisions of the Bill together, they had very high authority for saying that they would amount, in fact, to confiscating the property. In that connection he cited Clause 13, which provided that complainants could obtain a certificate to bring their case forward against the Railway Companies. Again, Clause 24, which was the central clause of that part of the Bill, provided for a compulsory revision of rates and charges whose maximum had already been fixed by Acts of

Parliament; and, on the faith that that maximum would not be disturbed or dealt with by compulsory revision, vast sums of money had been invested. The Joint Committee of the Houses of Lords and Commons, which sat in 1872, and was presided over by Mr. Chichester Fortescue, in their Report said it was a serious question in respect to periodical revision of railway rates, upon what principle that revision was to be performed. And the Report went on to say that if it was to be purely arbitrary, and if no rule was to be laid down, the power of revision would amount to the power to confiscate the property of the Railway Companies. What he desired, therefore, was that some assurance should be given that the clauses—particularly that relating to compulsory revision—should not be allowed to stand as at present, but that some precaution should be taken to prevent the confiscation which was feared. Therefore, he did not think it was an unreasonable request that he now made to the President of the Board of Trade, when he asked that right hon. Gentlemen to give them some assurance of that kind. Those proposals were entirely new. As far as he was aware, it had never before been suggested by any serious authority that a compulsory revision of that character should be enforced. An hon. Member who had spoken said that those proposals were the result of many Committees or Commissions—he thought the hon. Gentleman gave the number of them as 12 or 13; but that was merely the argument *post hoc ergo propter hoc.* Those proposals followed, indeed, the Reports of those Committees and Commissions; but, so far from the proposal of such a compulsory revision of rates being the result of the Reports of any of those Committees and Commissions, he believed that it was not recommended in any of them; and he called upon the right hon. Gentleman to say whether the Report of any Commission supported that new principle. He said that such a drastic measure as that should not have been proposed until every other means had been exhausted, until the Railway Companies had proved themselves utterly unwilling to come to fair terms on those subjects, But now, without any preparation, or any suggestion on the part of any tribunal or any Committee or Commission that ever inquired into the matter, that measure had been brought in at once to give in the widest and most stringent manner the power of compulsory revision of rates. He did not wish to trespass on the time of the House. He appealed to the President of the Board of Trade to give them an assurance on that subject. He, for his own part, was most unwilling that there should be a division on the second reading of the Bill. The Railway Companies were desirous to enter upon its future stages in the most friendly spirit with the Government; and if such an assurance as he had asked for was given by the right hon. Gentleman, he, for one, should be heartily glad to render all the assistance in his power to have that question finally settled. But if the discussion of the measure was to be carried on in the spirit shown by some of the assailants of the Railway Companies, if they were to be told that the clauses of the Bill as they stood were iron-bound and hard-and-fast provisions that could not be changed, if there was to be no protection afforded to the Railway Companies from that confiscation which they feared, then he could only say that the Directors of those Companies would, in duty to the shareholders, whose trustees they were, feel it to be their duty to offer every opposition in their power to the enactment of such clauses.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir CHARLES RUSSELL) (Hackney, S.) said, that he thought that his right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) had every reason to be satisfied with the result of the discussion, because, with the exception of the hon. Member for Stirlingshire (Mr. J. C. Bolton) and the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the Dublin University (Mr. Plunket), who had avowedly appeared as advocates of the railway interests, there had been little fear expressed that the general provisions of the Bill were calculated to injuriously affect the interests of the Railway Companies, while there had been a very marked expression of opinion, on the part of speakers on both sides of the House, in support of the main scope of the Bill. His hon. Friend (Mr. J. C. Bolton) seemed to think that the President of the Board of Trade had sought somewhat to disparage the recommendations made by the Committee to which reference had been made, known as Mr. Ashley's Committee. His hon. Friend, however, in doing so, could not have carefully considered the recommendations of that Committee, or compared those recommendations with the Bill, because, if he had done so, he would have seen that, with the exception of the 24th clause and the clauses pointing out its scope, the main substance of the Bill was, in fact, an endeavour to carry out the recommendations of that Committee. For instance, the uniformity and classification of charges, the question of terminal charges, and the publication of the terminal charges; the suggestion that the Railway Commission Court should be made perpetual; and the further suggestion that all questions relating to traffic by railways and canals should be under the jurisdiction of the Railway Commission Court—all these, and others, were dealt with by the Bill, following the suggestions of the Committee of 1882. Now, no one, in the course of the debate, had thrown any doubt upon the legal competence of Parliament to deal in any manner which in its wisdom might seem right with the whole question of Railway Rates. It was the undoubted right of Parliament to deal as it might think right and just with that or any other question. But it had been suggested in the speech of his hon. Friend the Member for Stirlingshire, and in the speech of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Dublin University, that there was no moral right in Parliament so to deal with these matters. He (Sir Charles Russell) wished shortly to point out the reasons why he thought that suggestion was by no means well-founded, and that it had both a legal and a moral right to do so. In the first place, one fallacy seemed to run through the arguments of all those who represented the railway interest. It had been assumed that the consequence of this Bill becoming law would be likely to be a general reduction of existing rates. He wished to suggest that one of the great objects sought to be accomplished, apart from the question of reduction, was reclassification, it being admitted on all hands that existing classifications were virtually obsolete, and were not symmetrical, and, further, that they should be made easily accessible to the whole public. But he was not desirous of avoiding the further point—namely, that not improbably, on this Bill becoming law, there might be a reduction, and, therefore, a revision, as to the amount of rates. Was it not within the moral competence of Parliament to deal with that question? He thought it was. As had been pointed out by the hon. Member for the Biggleswade Division of Bedfordshire (Mr. Magniac), in the Railway Clauses Act of 1845, Section 86, although there were certain maximum charges which it was within the power of the Railway Companies, in certain events, to charge, still they were not absolutely entitled to charge those maximum charges at all, because the section said that the maxima "shall also be reasonable." But he wanted to point out further that, in 1845, the persons representing the railway interests had very clear notice given them, although it was unnecessary from any point of view that they should have the notice, that Parliament, by conferring certain powers on Railway Companies, was not making a Parliamentary contract by which its hands were to be absolutely tied, and was not to be perfectly free, always within the lines of justice and equity, to deal with railway affairs in the way that the interests of the general public demanded. And if that was the principle upon which the granting of these powers originally rested, it was equally within the competence of Parliament, if the interests of the public demanded a revision, to make such revision. Express attention was drawn to this matter by Mr. Stuart-Wortley in 1845, and on his Motion a Standing Order was passed, declaring that nothing in this Act—the Act of 1845—contained—

> "Should be deemed to exempt Railway Companies from the provisions of any General Act relating to railways which may hereafter be passed during this or any future Session of Parliament."

To which Lord Howick, now Lord Grey, proposed to add—

> "Or from any future revision and alteration, under the authority of Parliament, of the maximum rates, fares, and charges authorized by this Act."

And with that addition the Resolution was adopted by the House, and became a Standing Order. One very eminent person, who had written to the Press under the signature of the second letter of the alphabet—his distinguished and learned Friend (Lord Bramwell)—had given an interpretation of that Order which, coming from so eminent a man, he ventured to think was extraordinary, because the noble and learned Lord said it was quite true that nothing in "this" Act contained should be taken to exempt the Railway Companies from future revision; but he should be surprised if his hon. and learned Friend the Member for the Isle of Wight (Sir Richard Webster) did not agree with him (Sir Charles Russell) that the Resolution he had quoted, in the form in which it was recorded as a Standing Order, was not an intimation of the will of Parliament that Railway Companies were subject to the possibility of having their Railway Rates revised at any time, if the need of the public required it, always subject, as he had said, to justice and equity. But the matter did not stop there. Every single Private Railway Bill since that period had contained this clause; and although he had seen it stated that there were several Railway Acts of an earlier date, he doubted very much if there was any Railway Company which had not, as part of its system, a portion of line built under the authority of an Act or Acts containing this clause. He wished, also, to call attention to the fact that the Railway Companies themselves had not on previous occasions urged this claim of vested rights, in consequence of the powers granted to them by Parliament. If they had vested rights, was it proper for Parliament to sanction the construction of competing lines? Again, the owners of canals had not complained of their vested rights being interfered with by the construction of railways which would compete with them, and which, in many cases, annihilated them, and without any compensation. When Railway Companies found it to their interest to get their Parliamentary powers altered or extended, they did not hesitate to take steps for that purpose. For example, the Great Northern Railway Company obtained from Parliament power to increase their charges for the carriage of coal. He trusted that he had clearly shown that the 24th clause of the Bill and the clauses connected with it were not only within the legal, but also within the moral, competence of Parliament. He would now refer to some of the criticisms which had been made, more or less in detail, on the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the late President of the Board of Trade (Mr. E. Stanhope) showed too much acerbity when he alluded to the present holder of that Office. Indeed, he believed that the right hon. Gentleman would on reconsideration come to the conclusion that in his remarks he was not generous, nor altogether fair. The right hon. Gentleman said that when the present President of the Board of Trade found that certain provisions of this Bill were not popular with the great railway interest, he endeavoured to shunt the unpopularity caused by the provisions contained in the measure upon that right hon. Gentleman. In his judgment there was not the slightest foundation for any such statement. When the Bill was introduced, and when it met with very general acceptance in the House, his right hon. Friend (Mr. Mundella) gave every credit to his Predecessor in Office for the efforts he had made to deal with this complicated and difficult question. He (Sir Charles Russell) understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that at some later period his right hon. Friend (Mr. Mundella) discussed in public what his Predecessor in Office had done in this matter. The debate on the introduction of the Bill occurred in the early part of March; but in view of the charge which had been made, he (Sir Charles Russell) was surprised to have his attention called to the fact that, on the 17th of February, in a speech delivered at a public meeting at Sheffield, the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. E. Stanhope) plumed himself on his labours, and, after referring to its drafting, stated the main provisions of the Bill he had prepared. Yet the right hon. Gentleman now said his Successor in Office only learnt his particular views on this subject from a private Memorandum. Why, with regard to the charge, the public report of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman was the only memorandum that his right hon. Friend (Mr. Mundella) had referred to. [Mr. E. STANHOPE: No, no!] With regard to the proposed tribunal, it ought to be such a Court as, in the opinion of the community, would be an efficient and a dignified Court. He did not know how such a result could be more satisfactorily arrived at than by having for its legal head a person who would also have the dignity and the *status* of a Judge of the High Court. He quite agreed that the question of the revision of rates at fixed periods only was well worth the consideration of the House. But no one contemplated a perpetually recurring revision. His right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dublin University asked whether there was any authority for any recommendation of a Committee on that question. The answer to that was, first of all, that no one suggested that the Railway Companies, to any considerable extent, although they might have the power to do so, charged the maximum rate. He believed that 75 per cent were special rates, and rates which were not carried up to the maximum. Then, with regard to the question as to whether there was any Parliamentary sanction for the suggestion of revision, he might say that Committee after Committee had reported upon the necessity for fresh classification, and the matter had also been dealt with in Bills brought in by several of the Railway Companies. Was it not clear that, in the classification of rates, the shifting of some goods from a higher to a lower rate necessarily involved a revision of the rates? They could not have a Bill dealing with classification without interfering, to a certain extent, with the revision of rates. But he did not base the case for the Bill upon that ground. He based it upon the broad ground that the law was in an utterly unsatisfactory state. His hon. Friend (Mr. Magniac) and his hon. Friend the Member for the Leith District (Mr. Jacks), and also the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Newton Division of Lancashire (Sir R. Assheton Cross), were very emphatic in speaking of the necessity for dealing with the Canal Question. His right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade felt that necessity fully, and he would be most willing to accept a suggestion from anyone who had any experience in the matter as to how the Bill might deal with that subject. His right hon. Friend would put his own Amendments on the Paper in connection with that point; and he (Sir Charles Russell) was sure, as he had stated, that any suggestions from anyone in a position to make them would be fully considered. The state of things with reference to the questions of canals was not creditable to the country. It was quite true that the Committee of 1872 reported unanimously against the Railway Companies being allowed to buy the canals; and the Statute of 1873 prohibited the purchase of canals by Railway Companies. It was equally true—indeed, it was notorious—that there were Railway Companies which had not bought in the name of the Company, but had got hold of the shares of Canal Companies, and, having got hold of them, had placed them in the names of the nominees of Railway Companies. That was a state of things which, if it could be dealt with satisfactorily, ought to be dealt with. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir R. Assheton Cross) was the only Member, in addition to the two hon. Members who represented directly and avowedly the railway view in this matter, who objected to this classification and revision. These were the observations which he had thought it right to offer. Many of the criticisms obviously referred to matters which could be dealt with in Committee. He had, he thought, however, submitted reasons why the second reading of the Bill should be agreed to.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER (Isle of Wight) said, that he had taken considerable interest in that question. On the Motion for leave to introduce the Bill, he stated that, so far as they were concerned on that side of the House, there was every desire to meet the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman in a perfectly fair spirit; but he also said that it seemed to him that any measure of this kind must be founded on justice, because it would be exceedingly wrong to endeavour to pass any remedial measure of this kind if the measure was simply brought in for the purpose of redressing grievances from which traders were suffering, without considering what was due to the Companies themselves. There could be no lasting settlement of the question unless the interests of both parties were fairly regarded. With, perhaps, one exception, he thought there was no part of the Bill which might not, at any rate, be allowed to pass the second reading. The first and most important part of the Bill was that which dealt with the Railway Commissioners' Court, and the remedies to be given to traders with respect to grievances which did undoubtedly exist. He believed that nearly all the traders required could be given to them without any injury being done to the interest of the Companies, and could be given by virtue of provisions quite apart from the much-debated 24th clause. He would therefore suggest to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade that it would be well worth his consideration whether they should not have that clause taken out of the Bill, and have it brought in as a separate measure. ["No, no!"] He would give his reasons for that; and he might say that he desired to approach the matter strictly from an impartial point of view. With regard to the Commissioners' Court, he had had the great advantage of practising on many occasions before that tribunal, and he wished to be allowed to pay his tribute to the courtesy, the ability, and the great application shown by every Member of the Commission whenever any business was brought before them. It was quite impossible to overrate the excellent manner in which they had endeavoured to do their duty; and he was sure that every member of the Bar who had practised, and every applicant or respondent who had appeared before them, had come away from the Court with the feeling that every Commissioner did his utmost to consider the question raised from every point of view. He was anxious to say that much, because he was one of those who had maintained that the tribunal ought to have a legal President. He advocated that view in the interests of the traders quite as much as in the interests of the Railway Companies, as it was only by having a strong trained lawyer at the head of the Court that they could have matters kept within a moderate compass, and evidence rejected that was not material to the particular questions discussed. He was perfectly certain that if they could have five years under one system, and five years under the other, the traders would be among the first to advocate the appointment of a trained lawyer to preside over the Court. In connection with this part of the matter, he wished to point out that he had never suggested that he should like questions of facts in these cases to be decided by lawyers only. What he had maintained was this—that certainly more than half the cases which had come before the Commissioners were mere questions of law. He quite agreed, however, with all hon. Members who had spoken from that point of view that it was most important that those who sat to decide questions of fact should be in an equal position with the legal member of the Court, and he saw no reason why there should be an appeal on questions of fact. Some of his hon. Friends thought there ought to be an appeal upon matters of fact; but if they had a skilled tribunal it ought to be left to decide matters of fact, even although it might possibly go wrong sometimes. He would prefer to have the Court presided over by a Judge, because he desired that it should be a Court thoroughly respected and of equal authority with one of the divisions of the High Court; and when the Commission was not sitting the country could have the services of the Judge in one of the Courts. As to undue preference, he was in favour of enlarging the jurisdiction of the Commission as far as could be done on the lines of the Act of 1854. Clause 18 of the Bill got rid of the difficulty which had been felt, as to whether the Commissioners had power to interfere, where the only cause of complaint was illegality of charge, and Clause 25 put upon a Company the burden of proof that a charge involved no undue preference. No one who had studied the question from the traders' point of view, as well as from the Companies' point of view, could doubt that grouping would be a very great advantage to traders. He (Sir Richard Webster) himself had been engaged in litigation, in which it was shown that not merely a shilling, but even a penny or a halfpenny, in rates would determine a contract. By grouping together the traders in a district, although one who was nearest a port would not be personally benefited, the public would benefit, and the traders would benefit, through not being allowed to compete with each other. Some hon. Members had suggested that there should be equal mileage rates; but he (Sir Richard Webster) did not think that anybody who had any real experience of the matter could come to any other conclusion than that equal mileage rates, compulsorily applied, would be a very great misfortune to the trader and the country at large. Besides, grouping was wholly inconsistent with equal mileage rates; and all authorities were agreed that equal mileage rates were practically unworkable. He did not admit that Railway Companies had spent money iniquitously in litigation, and that they had created fictitious stock to meet that expenditure; and a study of the auditing of railway accounts would show that that was impossible. The change to be made by the Bill would probably not diminish the engagement of counsel; and he did not think that, in that respect, traders would gain much from a pecuniary point of view. Having thought over the matter most carefully, he thought it would be unwise to encumber the Bill, which otherwise contained many good provisions, by any compulsory clauses, such as Clause 24, which was regarded from some points of view as a clause which would reduce the maxima of charges. It was true that anomalies existed which Railway Companies had shown themselves willing, to a great extent, to redress; but these anomalies were mainly due not to the facts that the maxima in particular classes were too high, and that the classification was imperfect. If it were made clear to the Companies, as it ought to be made clear, that this was not an attempt to cut down maxima rates and charges, and unfairly to rearrange goods within these maxima, a great part of the objection to the Bill would disappear. Railway Companies had not been unwilling to deal with the subject themselves; they had introduced Bills last year, and it was not their fault that they were not proceeded with. He thought that in a Bill which had so much good in it in regard to the Railway Commission and undue preference—provisions which, in themselves, gave so extended a measure of protection to traders—it was unwise to burden it by what was almost a separate piece of legislation. To insert in Clause 24 the provisions necessary for the guidance of the tribunal would occupy the House a long time, and it would endanger the Bill to press the clause without such directions. No one denied the competence of the House to legislate as it would, and no one would deny that the House had sanctioned a scale of charges upon the faith of which money had been invested; and it ought not to interfere with that scale unless it were shown to be a failure, or to be based upon a wrong principle. It would, therefore, be desirable to drop the clause, which gave rise to the greater part of the opposition to the Bill, for the sake of passing the portion which would really bring great benefit to traders. By removing the clause, and bringing it forward as a separate measure, the Government would get rid of the greater part, if not the whole, of the fair opposition to the Bill. The more one looked at Clause 24, the more impossible it was to see how it was to be worked out to the satisfaction of the traders without doing or contemplating some injury to the property of those who had invested money on the faith of previous Acts of Parliament. The question of terminal charges was a separate one, and he quite agreed that it ought to be distinctly stated what the terminal services were. A contest had been long going on between traders and the Railway Companies as to the right to charge terminals. Ever since 1845, in the case of short distances, when the rates were unremunerative without terminals, terminals were added. More than one judgment had recognized the right to make these charges, and the right was upheld by the Court of Appeal. That question, and the maxima of terminals to be charged, might well be dealt with in the Bill; and he saw no objection to some provision being made for terminal maxima being laid down, and for terminal services being classified. Irrespective of classification, there might be a fair discussion as to what were the maxima which might be applied to terminal charges, and he did not believe that any Company would object to a limit being fixed. That part of Clause 24 might, at all events, be satisfactorily dealt with by legislation. In approaching the question he desired fairly and honestly to strengthen the hands of the Government, in order to produce a workable Bill. It would be a very desirable thing if the Bill, which it was admitted was, to a great extent, the production of both Front Benches, should ultimately pass into law, and without entering upon the contentious matter of Clause 24. He trusted the House would see there were, in the earlier part of the Bill, as in the latter part of it, matters well worthy of consideration, and which ought to form the basis of sound and useful legislation; and from that point of view he trusted the Session would see a most useful tribunal made permanent, strengthened in its authority, and producing a feeling of relief and justice in the minds of traders who might appeal to it without in any way interfering unfairly with the interests of the railways.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle), said, he thought that the position of the Railway Companies, as regarded their disputes with the public, was much exaggerated, and, as he had said before, very much the offspring of a want of system in the legislation connected with it, and which had prevailed for many years past. The public thought their interests were served by the encouragement of competing lines; but so soon as the new lines became a success they arranged terms with their older rivals, so that the public did not get the benefit of competition. If Parliament had at first laid down some system of railway development a great many bad lines would never have been made; but, owing to the large number of duplicate lines, traders were paying double the rates for transport they need otherwise have done. The principle, however, which had been adopted was this—"Let us have as many competing lines as possible;" and the result was, as in the case of a competing line which had recently been sanctioned, no sooner was the line completed than the managers met together and the same rates were charged as before. It was not true, as hon. Members had said, that Railway Directors were unwilling to meet their shareholders or their customers. He (Sir Joseph Pease) had been a Director, he believed, almost longer than any Member of that House, and he knew of scarcely any instance when Directors had refused to meet deputations either of traders or proprietors. When the right hon. Gentleman the late President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain) suggested that the Companies themselves should bring in Bills dealing with the question, no fewer than seven Companies responded to the invitation. He was sure those Companies had no desire to increase their tolls, or to act unfairly to the public, as they had shown in their willingness to introduce Bills of their own, though he was ready to admit that the question would be better dealt with by one rather than by many Acts of Parliament. A good deal had been said about Canals; but it ought to be remembered that the Canals might make arrangements with each other and with the Railway Companies which would prevent the public from gaining by the supposed competition. A great deal of the present agitation had, no doubt, risen owing to foreign cattle and corn being carried at lower rates than English cattle and corn; but nothing Parliament could do would be of any avail so long as the rates of Steamboat Companies were not also dealt with. If any man ought to take a fair view of the question it was himself; because he was more largely interested as a trader than as a Railway Director. Railway Companies and those they represented had a right to ask from Her Majesty's Ministers with regard to the Bill what construction they placed upon Clause 24? If it was to be construed into raising one universal and general classification, and rates were not to be confiscatory, but were to be such as would give Railway Companies the power of earning a dividend in decent times, as they now possessed, then he, for one, wished the Bill God-speed, and no railway man in his senses would at all oppose such a view—that was, if it simply meant consolidation. If it were to be construed by the Board of Trade into a classification and consolidation which did not mean confiscation, then there would be no reason to oppose the second reading of the Bill. But if it meant that, in their wisdom or their unwisdom, they were going to give the Board of Trade the command of the whole position, and to do everything it pleased, then he thought that that was contrary and detrimental to the public credit and interest, and to the interest both of railway shareholders and of railway traders. Another clause to which he wished to call attention was that which referred to the constant revision of rates. He had asked the opinion of many persons upon this point, and he found that they put no confidence in this clause at all; it would be a constant source of irritation between traders and shareholders, and was, he believed, desired by no one—the rates once fixed should remain till Parliament again thought right to take up the general question. Another point was the very large number of people who were allowed to bring the Railway Companies before the Commissioners. He did not want the number to be restricted; but he thought that there ought to be some precaution adopted, such as requiring some deposit to be made, so as to avoid frivolous cases being brought forward. With regard to the Conciliation Clauses, no confidence whatever was felt in them. Either the railway charges were right, or they were wrong; either the Commissioners could deal with them or they could not; but, by this provision, every small trader could come before the Commissioners and have a gentleman sent down who had no authority except to report to the Board of Trade. It was true that there had been Councils of Conciliation; but that had been where both parties had chosen an umpire. On these the right hon. Gentleman had served; but both parties had selected him. The gentleman who was to be sent down was only a reporting officer, not an arbitrator; if a charge made against a Company had anything in it, it ought to be dealt with by an authoritative tribunal. With regard to what had been said as to secret rates, he contended that a reply was to be found in the Report of the Committee of 1881, which said that there was no such thing. A list of passenger fares was put up beside the booking places, and merchandize rates were also put up, though whether that was of much service there was considerable doubt, since *Bradshaw* itself was easy in comparison to some of these rate-books. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would consider the points which he had referred to. For his part, he heartily wished the whole question settled. It had kept railway officers and Railway Directors busy for several years past; and he prayed for a fair and an immediate settlement.

Mr. LIONEL COHEN (Paddington, N.): I think the commercial aspect of the case is that which we have chiefly to look to, and that we should study the prosperity of the country as well as that of the railways themselves. We must remember that at the present time the railways of the country occupy the place which in former centuries was held by the high roads; and if it had been contemplated that such a vast traffic was to arise, it would probably have been thought the duty of the State in this country, as it has been in other countries, to retain this property in its own hands, and to expend from the resources of the Empire the funds necessary to maintain it, receiving the rates in return. In the position in which we now stand, it may be fairly stated that the whole of this legislation is called for by the various asseverations which have been made on behalf of trade—namely, in the first place, that the trade of the country has been crippled, or, at any rate, has not obtained its highest development in consequence of excessive charges, and that if the charges were lowered our goods could be produced cheaper and circulated with greater facility, so that the home trade of the country would be considerably improved. In the second place, it is alleged that differential rates operate in favour of the foreign producer, who thus has the advantage of lower rates both in his own country, where the railways are the property of his own Government, and in ours also. Thirdly, it is asserted that canal competition has failed to remedy either of the grievances I have mentioned, the canals being either under the control or else the absolute property of the Railway Companies. The fourth grievance pressed upon the Government is that the operation of the Railway Rates tends to confer an advantage on certain districts of the country to the disadvantage of other districts, and to twist, as it were, the trade of the country away from its natural course. To assimilate the rates which prevail abroad and the rates which prevail in this country—the Railway Companies in this country being subject to influences which do not operate abroad—might really assume something of a confiscatory character, and it would be ignoring all the facts if we were to attempt to equalize our railway legislation to the level of railway legislation abroad. What is complained of by the traders is not so much the high scale of the rates as their inconsistency and want of classification, as well as the want of facilities given by the Railway Companies for the development of the trade in a particular locality. I think I shall be able to show the House that these complaints do not proceed from one branch of the traders only, but that they are universal. I do not know whether any hon. Member has taken the trouble to peruse the evidence which has been given before the Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade; but it will be found that not a single witness, except in the shipping interest, was examined in reference to

Railway Rates who did not complain of some act of injustice on the part of the Railway Companies, not so much in regard to the rates, although they were onerous and prohibitory in some cases, as to the inconsistency of such rates. Sir Lowthian Bell was examined on behalf of the iron trade. He is a Railway Director himself, and he admitted, in speaking of the small amount of railway extension projected for the current year, that the London and North-Western Company are not promoting a single mile of railway, although we have not yet arrived at a point at which railways cover the country. Probably that arrest of railway enterprize is, as the hon. Baronet opposite (Sir Joseph Pease) suggested, due to groundless fears arising from the inception of this Bill. Mr. Smith, a Director of the Barrow Hematite Iron Company, who are served by the Furness Railway system and the London and North-Western Railway, pointed out that the rates are inconsistent with those which prevail in other districts—such as Middlesbrough and Wales—which are served by the Midland Company. That result was owing to the fact that there had been a combination between the Railway Companies which served the district which prevented the due effects of competition from being realized. Mr. Smith told the Commission that although there had been a considerable modification of the Railway Rates during the last two years, they will not compare with those charged elsewhere, nor will our rates compare with those imposed abroad, and that trade is thereby so much handicapped against the foreigner, because in moving our materials we pay much more for the services rendered than they do abroad. The next witness was Mr. Donaldson, who came from the Cleveland district, and who said that if the transit facilities from Cleveland had been increased by land as much as by water, the prosperity of the iron trade of Middlesbrough and the country generally would have been enormously increased. The Cutlers' Company from Sheffield said that, notwithstanding the number of railways which converge upon Sheffield, they have been of very little advantage to the trade of the town, owing to the onerous rates which prevail in reference to railway transit. The witness who gave this evidence also said that for the purpose of carrying on the heavy goods traffic it was necessary to preserve water carriage, but that, unfortunately, it had been absorbed by the different Railway Companies. Another witness gave evidence from the important firm of John Brown and Company, and his statements were to the same effect. Next came a witness who complained of the preferential rates charged for the carriage of goods across Yorkshire to Liverpool. One extraordinary statement made by another witness was that Manchester goods packed for the foreign trade were charged 25*s*. per ton, while the charge for the home trade was 40*s*. Distinction was thus drawn between the Manchester and London trade and the Manchester trade through London; and to meet this absurd system of differential charges a practice had been introduced to take goods out of the docks by water, and forward them on lorries. Can there be anything more absurd than such a system, and is there any wonder at the traders of the country complaining of it? There were also witnesses from Manchester, from Galashiels, from Preston, and from Bradford. The last complained of the differential rates from Hull and Liverpool to Wakefield, Halifax, and Leeds, the rates being 1*s*. 6*d*. less than to Bradford. The next witness, Sir Joseph Lee, a manufacturer of alizerine, told the Commission that it cost more to take alizerine from the banks of the Thames to Manchester than it cost to convey it from Germany. I should like hon. Members to take up this book, and another which will shortly be published, and to read the statements which they will find there from representatives of all classes of traders. The next class of witnesses examined by the Royal Commission were the agricultural witnesses. A farmer from Northumberland said that he had plaintively remonstrated again and again with the Railway Company as to the excessive amount of the railway charges on agricultural produce; but he added—

> "It is of no use; they have no opposition; they have it all their own way, and we cannot force them. I have tried to bargain with them; but that also is of no use. It would cost me more to send cattle to Liverpool than it costs people to send them from Chicago and New York."

These are matters which I certainly hope the Bill of the Government will remedy.

Another witness—a tenant farmer from the Isle of Ely—said that the Great Eastern Company charged him 2*s.* a-ton more from Ely to London than from London to Ely; and he further showed that the charge for foreign produce from London included dock hire, and collection from the ship or wharf in London; so that foreign produce carried from London was taken from the ships, and conveyed down to the country at a considerably less rate than the English farmer is required to pay. There are many more statements; some of them, if possible, even stronger than those which I have given to the House. We had statements from two Gentlemen who were sent out to America in connection with the Duke of Richmond's Commission. One of them—the Secretary to a Farmers' Club—complained greatly of the way in which the Worcestershire farmers are handicapped by the imposition of heavy Railway Rates, and he stated that the trade in corn has gone from Coventry, because it was impossible to send corn from Evesham to Coventry, in consequence of the rates charged by the Railway Company who have succeeded in diverting the trade to Birmingham. The next question is the question of cattle. We had a witness from Darlington who told us that home cattle are charged at the rate of £5 19*s.* 3*d.* for a small truck; while foreign cattle are only charged £5 8*s.* From Darlington to Manchester the sums paid were respectively £3 7*s.* for cattle, and £2 14*s.* for sheep; whereas the charge for foreign cattle was £2 8*s.* 6*d.*; and for foreign cattle and sheep indiscriminately £2 4*s.* 3*d.* No history, I suppose, would be complete without an Irish grievance; and the Commission had before them a feather merchant from Cork, who complained that that trade had been totally destroyed by the operations of the Railway Companies. His theory was that the railways should be purchased by the State; but, under the present circumstances, I do not think that would be a practical remedy, or one that is likely to be resorted to by the Government. This witness was examined after the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) had brought in his Bill, and he said he was a strong advocate of that measure, on the ground that it would assist private traders to help themselves. Among the witnesses there was also a gentleman who formerly had a seat in this House, Mr. W. J. Harris, now a farmer in Devonshire. He told the Commission that the Railway Rates are relatively unfair and absolutely oppressive. A farmer from Bishop Stortford spoke of the advantages which the foreigner possesses in the carriage of cattle and timber, and he pointed out that the farmer lost 6*s.* 9*d.* per acre in consequence of the differential rates. There was also a witness from the coal trade at Wigan, and another from Durham, both of whom complained not of the rates being excessive in themselves, but of their being unfairly in favour of the foreigner. We had also the evidence of the hon. Member for West Wolverhampton (Mr. Hickman), who has given to the House the effect of his own statements. A summary of all this evidence tends to prove that a good case is made out for this Bill in the interest of commerce, of trade of every kind, and of agriculture. It is absolutely essential that some change should be made; and the only question is whether the Bill, which I hope will be read a second time by the unanimous voice of the House, will meet the wants of the traders, and get rid of that oppression at the hands of the Railway Companies which is the worst evil they have now to guard against. I do not think that there need be any apprehension of unfair treatment towards the Railway Companies themselves. In France the same system proposed to be introduced into this country already exists. The evidence of some of the witnesses who brought these facts before the Royal Commission has not yet been published; but it has been placed in the hands of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade before the Recess, and he would see that in France there is a *Conseil Inférieur* to determine the rates which are to exist on a railway, and, once determined, they cannot be raised for 12 months; although they can be lowered. They do not become operative, however, until they have received the assent of the *Conseil Supérieur.* The Railway Companies in France do enjoy a certain amount of prosperity; but they are subjected to restrictions very similar to those proposed to be imposed upon our Railway Companies by this measure.

I believe that the fears of the Railway Companies with regard to the Bill are greatly exaggerated, and that they will have no cause to regret that they should be asked to contribute, even by means which they may regard as a grievance, to the passing of a measure which has for its object the improvement of the declining industry of the country. I come now to one part of the Bill to which I cannot extend the same meed of approbation and satisfaction which I have given to other parts of the measure. I refer to the 2nd section of Clause 25, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade will give his attention to that particular clause. At present its terms are doubtful and ambiguous; and I am somewhat afraid that under the operation of this section the Railway Companies would be able, to a great extent, to override the beneficial relief which I believe will generally be given by the measure. There ought to be some more stringent definition of the term "undue preference." The 2nd section of the clause says—

> "In deciding whether a lower charge does or does not create an undue preference, the Commissioners may, in addition to any other considerations affecting the case, take into consideration whether such charge is necessary for the purpose of securing the traffic in respect of which it is made."

That is a very doubtful and ambiguous section; and I am afraid that under its operation the Companies may get rid of much of the beneficial relief extended by other sections of the Bill to the public. Undue preference consists of three things—not only of that ordinary kind of preference of one trader over another, which, if it does exist at present, the Railway Commissioners have ample power to deal with, nor of that undue preference of the foreigner over the Englishman, which I believe to be a just cause of legislation, but it consists also of that undue preference, such as I have alluded to in the case of Worcestershire, where the farmer was compelled to send his corn round in a particular direction, because it was more economical to the Railway Company to carry it in that way. Now, I do not think that Clause 25, to which I refer, will enable a grievance of that kind to be met. I have only one word more to say, and it is in reference to the composition of the new Railway Commission. No doubt, there are a good many Members of this House who would naturally have some sort of professional attachment to a legal tribunal; but I hardly think that feeling is shared by the commercial classes of the country. On the contrary, I remember that not long since, when the Chambers of Commerce were called upon to consider some questions, they approved of the composition of a tribunal for settling trade disputes, which should consist of the two elements, both legal and commercial; and the suggestion I would make is that the commercial representatives should not have subordinate, but concurrent authority with the legal representatives. Nothing certainly has hitherto occurred which should give to the legal Body any vested right in connection with the settlement of these commercial questions. In reference to this particular Bill, I think the Railway Companies have endeavoured to prove too much, because they have attempted to establish that they have acquired a monopoly which it is impossible for Parliament to give to them—namely, that, irrespective of all circumstances of trade, and of the fluctuation in the value of all things which might occur, the rates they are entitled to charge should be fixed for all time. Of course, Parliament, omnipotent as it is, has the power to fix what the rates should be; but unless some consideration is displayed towards those who are engaged in commerce the trade of the country may die out, and then there will be nothing left upon which to pay rates. It is, therefore, quite obvious that the rates could not have been decided for ever at the time the Railway Acts were framed. I think the Railway Companies, in the outcry they have made against the Bill, have lost sight of the certainty that any reduction made in the rates at which traffic is carried has always hitherto led to a revival of trade itself. When they speak of the difficulties of the trade, and the necessity of fixing differential rates in favour of foreign countries, they lose sight of the fact that the volume of the home trade is far greater than that of the foreign trade, and that much more advantage is to be obtained from it than from twisting it in favour of any Continental trade. So far as the new Railway Commission is concerned, I am certainly in favour, at any rate, of giving some trial to the conciliatory tribunal which the right hon. Gentleman proposes to introduce; and I trust that the Amendments which may be made in the Bill, after it shall have been read a second time, will have the effect of removing the prejudices which are now entertained against it by the Railway Companies.

SIR BERNHARD SAMUELSON (Oxfordshire, Banbury): I must confess that the debate has, on the whole, very much gratified, whilst it has surprised me. It has presented a remarkable contrast between the tone adopted by hon. Gentlemen representing the railway interest in addressing the House to-night, and that of their speeches to their shareholders. It will be in the recollection of hon. Members that circulars of a most inflammatory character have been issued by the Railway Companies to their shareholders, and not to their shareholders alone, but to the debenture holders. The circulars were drawn up in terms calculated to alarm them in reference to this Bill, and which I cannot but describe as greatly exaggerated. One would have supposed from these circulars that the entire interest of the railway shareholders was to disappear, and that even the interests of the debenture holders were not to remain intact. All that seems to-night to have resolved itself into the question put to the President of the Board of Trade to define the meaning of the 24th clause. Now, I must confess that if I had been in their place I should have felt disposed, before issuing those circulars, to have addressed myself to the President of the Board of Trade, and have asked him what has been asked to-night—namely, what is really intended by the clause in question? I believe before the debate closes that my right hon. Friend will be able to give us a perfectly satisfactory answer to that question. I shall be very much astonished if he does not give an answer which even the Gentlemen who have been so much alarmed will consider satisfactory. I will take the liberty of anticipating the speech of my right hon. Friend so far as to say that I shall be much surprised if his answer is not that it is far from his desire by that clause to do anything to injure the Railway Companies, and that its intention is not to effect a general reduction of the maximum rates which Railway Companies have power to charge, but simply a revision and re-adjustment of a nature which the Railway Companies themselves have admitted to be absolutely necessary. They have admitted that the classification should be revised; that the various provisions of the innumerable Bills which have been passed should be consolidated; and it is impossible that there can be a revision of the classification without a revision of the rates accompanying it. Then, if that revision is to take place, the only question remaining—and it seems to be a question to a great extent between the two Front Benches—is, by whom is it to be made, and when? It has been suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Horncastle Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. E. Stanhope) that the Railway Commission would be a more fit tribunal for that purpose than the Board of Trade; while by my hon. and learned Friend the late Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) it has been urged that the clause had better be left out of the Bill altogether. I should like to point out that I have always understood, and believe it to be an admitted axiom, that legislation, administration, and judicial decision should not be in the same hands; and if you refer this question to the Railway Commission you will run counter to that admirable and well-established maxim. As to the suggestion of my hon. and learned Friend the late Attorney General, that the clause should be left out of the Bill altogether and another Bill introduced, I have further to point out that we have already tried that plan in previous Sessions, and have failed. The question is one which is, no doubt, of importance. The Railway Companies themselves acknowledge that a different classification is required, and they acknowledge it in a practical way, because they adopt an altogether different classification when dealing among themselves. Another thing which they may adopt is the principle of mileage rates. No one, with any common sense, would propose equal mileage rates; but there may be a system of mileage rates diminishing with the distance, which would be advantageous both to the Railway Companies and to the traders. A system of that kind prevails on the Continent, and especially in Germany. I have in my hand a little book, which gives the mileage rates adopted in that country. From this little book, which contains only a very few pages, a trader can calculate for himself the sum he will have to pay for the conveyance of his goods, no matter what the description of the goods may be, from any one station to any other station in Germany. I may be told that it is possible to do these things in Germany, but that they cannot be done in this country; but I have in my hand another document—an English document—which gives a table of rates agreed to at a Conference of Railway Managers, and known as the Normanton Scale, which forms the basis on which certain railways act in the case of goods passing over more than one railway. That, also, is a scale of mileage rates. One objection made to Clause 24 is that no directions are given as to the principle upon which the Board of Trade is to act in revising and arranging the rates; but I think, as is the case now with the Continental railways, it may be possible that by bringing the Companies and traders to a Conference, in the presence of the Board of Trade, an arrangement may be arrived at which will simplify very much the work of the Railway Companies themselves, and which the Railway Directors would be able to understand. I doubt whether, at this moment, they really understand the principle—if there be such a thing as principle in it—upon which the Railway Managers carry on the traffic of the country. If this 24th clause be the only bone of contention between the Railway Companies and my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella), I am prepared to tell my right hon. Friend that I am expressing the views of many traders, that if any other alternative mode can be found by which a clear and intelligible system of classification can be introduced for effecting the object contemplated by the 24th clause we shall not be sticklers for that clause, because this matter of maximum rates, after all, is of very little consequence to the great majority of traders. Nobody looks into a Railway Bill in order to ascertain what is the maximum rate a Railway Company is authorized to charge; but what we do care about is what we are actually charged. A bare statement of the maximum rate that may be charged would be of little or no use, and the whole matter might just as well be left alone if it is to end there. If we are to have maximum rates at all, they ought to be maximum rates for single packages, for small consignments, for truck loads, and for train loads. We ought to have maximum rates adapted to different circumstances; and unless we get this, as far as the trader is concerned, maximum rates can only be looked on as an appendage to re-classification. Therefore, I say that, as far as the 24th clause is concerned, it is really a question more of machinery than one of actual consequence as bearing upon the interests of the traders. Then, if the 24th clause be the only bone of contention, I hope I may, to a certain extent, have anticipated the views of my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade, and in that case I think we may almost say that we shall have no division on the second reading of the Bill. But having taken a considerable amount of interest in the question, as representing, to a certain extent, the traders, since it happens that I am the President for the year of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, I ought, perhaps, to add one or two words on the subject of the Bill generally. The first matter with which I shall deal is the constitution of the Railway Commission as proposed by the Bill. For my own part, I see no reason why the Railway Commission should not be allowed to continue to exist as it is constituted at the present moment. I believe that the traders are thoroughly satisfied with it. I do not think they care whether additional dignity be conferred upon it or not. What they want is a readily accessible tribunal which shall be cheap and expeditious. If it can be shown that by putting a Judge at the head of that tribunal those objects can be better accomplished we would gladly accept the proposal; but there is one object which we are most anxious to secure, and it is this—that, whoever is at the head of the Commission, the main element of the Commission shall not be destroyed, and this can only be effected by retaining at least two of the Gentlemen who are now upon it as Members of the new tribunal. If that is done another condition would be also necessary—namely, that the three Gentlemen forming the Commission should be co-equal, and that, at most, the Judge should only be *primus* *inter pares.* It cannot be expected that the other two Commissioners should consent to sit with him merely as assessors. The powers of the lay Members of the Court and of the President should be equal, and they should have an equal right of expressing their judgment whenever there might happen to be a difference. Of course, superior dignity would naturally attach to the President of the tribunal. We should be satisfied if the Commission were constituted as at present; but if it is to be changed, we think it is necessary that, at least, two of the Commissioners, who have now acquired such great experience, should not be shunted, but that in the future the public should continue to have the benefit of their experience. It is not necessary that I should say more in reference to the constitution of the Commission, as the details will be left for the Committee stage; but I am anxious to express my approval of the extension which the Bill proposes to give to its jurisdiction. The 18th clause possesses, in my opinion, very great value; but I should be glad to see some little alteration made in it. That, also, will be a question for the consideration of the Committee; but I may indicate my sense of the direction which I think the alteration should take. Hitherto the Railway Commissioners have only had the power of ordering the law to be carried out upon the cases submitted to them; but it has been beyond their jurisdiction to award damages. Now, I think that if they find that the law has been broken, and that damages are due, they should have power to award damages. That is not, as I understand, provided by the Bill; but it is certainly a provision which, I think, ought to be made. With regard to the question of appeals, I take it that we are all agreed, and that the 15th clause has met with universal acceptance. No appeal is to be granted on a question of fact; and there is only to be one appeal on questions of law. The late Attorney General pointed out just now that, in particular cases, the traders would not be satisfied with this limitation; but I venture to say that for one case in which dissatisfaction would arise there would be hundreds in which the traders would rejoice to know that this is the law, because they are most anxious that they should not be dragged from Court to Court. Then, reverting to the 24th clause, I must say that, as it stands, I look upon the Board of Trade, in these matters, as a tribunal of conciliation just as much as I should if the word "conciliation" were expressed in the clause. What we think will happen with regard to the 24th clause is this—that Railway Companies will send in a revised classification, with tables of charges and rates, and traders who have a knowledge of the matter will be consulted; an attempt will be made to reconcile the views of both parties, and it is only in the last resort, where either the traders or the Railway Companies are unreasonable, that the Board of Trade will exert its authority and prepare a schedule of rates. But when they have done this the matter will not be finally settled, because it will be necessary that the rates and classification should receive the assent of Parliament, and Parliament will represent the Railway Companies as much as the traders; and if Parliament finds that either the classification or the schedule of rates is unfair to the Railway Companies I have every confidence in its justice. I do not believe that it would pass an unfair schedule, even with the high recommendations of the Board of Trade. Then there is the 25th clause, which deals with the question of undue preference, as in the case of unequal rates and charges for equal services. Now, I think that clause might be compressed into four or five lines. The 2nd sub-section of it, if my right hon. Friend will allow me to say so, is, I think, a very unwise one. I hope that he will be induced to give it up. I am sure that the traders will do their best to throw it out. I am equally averse to the next sub-section, which deals with the question of grouping. I do not believe it is possible to draw a clause with respect to grouping which would work better than the law as it now exists. Grouping is a most difficult question to deal with. It is very difficult indeed to say whether grouping does or does not produce an undue preference. Perhaps I may be allowed to give an instance which is within my own knowledge. The raw materials with which certain manufacturers have to deal are carried at mileage rates; but when those materials have been converted into finished products they are carried at grouped rates. It is impossible, under such circumstances, that some advantage should not be given to one manufacturer over another; but it is a very difficult case indeed to deal with. The law as it stands is that no undue preference should be given by group rates. In some cases it would be fair to allow them, and in others it would be proper to reject them; and I see no reason for the sub-section introduced into Clause 25 dealing with the question of group rates. The only other clause on which I desire to say a word is Clause 28, which deals with the question of complaints to the Board of Trade of improper charges by the Railway Companies. With regard to that clause, there seems to be a great difference of opinion to-night; some set great value on it, while others think it cumbrous and unworkable. I confess that, personally, I have great faith in the clause. I believe that it will prevent a great deal of unnecessary litigation, and that it will be of advantage to all concerned, whether they be Railway Companies or traders. The business of the Railway Companies is carried on by servants, and to a great extent by irresponsible servants; and I am afraid that some Railway Managers pay more attention to the possibility of filching a little traffic from a neighbouring Company than they do to serving the permanent interest of their employers. I think that clause will, in the long run, be found of great benefit to all parties concerned. In my opinion, too much importance has been attached to the question of the canals. I am not speaking about canals accommodating vessels able to carry 2,000, or even only 500 tons, such as those which are to be found in America. I can fully understand the utility of canals of that kind; but I speak of the wretched little waterways which we have in this country, and which would never be able to compete successfully with the great Railway Companies. The Canal Question is, in my opinion, of altogether secondary importance. There is just one more matter to which the attention of the President of the Board of Trade should be called. At present the Railway Companies say sometimes that they are common carriers, and at other times that they are not, just as it happens to suit their purpose. Great Railway Companies refuse to carry coals unless they are sent by the coal proprietors; and in other cases they will not carry coals between one station and another. There have been cases in which Railway Companies have refused to carry bricks between certain stations. I think there ought to be one universal rule that every Railway Company in the Kingdom is a common carrier to all intents and purposes, and is bound to carry all goods which can be carried without injury. I do not find anything in the Bill to that effect, and it is an omission which ought to be supplied. I cannot sit down without thanking my right hon. Friend for the great trouble he has taken in the preparation of the Bill; and I thank also the President of the Board of Trade under the late Government for the share he has had in its construction. The little passage of arms which we heard to-night between the two right hon. Gentlemen will, I am sure, be soon forgotten. At any rate, it will not be remembered by the traders; and I believe the time will come when even the Railway Companies will regard the passing of this measure, which is the joint work of both right hon. Gentlemen, with deep gratitude and satisfaction.

MR. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk): I hope that the House will allow me, coming as I do from a district which is largely interested in this question, to detain it, even at this late hour, for a very few minutes. I wish to impress upon the House the experience we have gained and the difficulties we have had to encounter in the district of Liverpool in dealing with the Railway Companies. During all my business experience we have been endeavouring to induce the Railway Companies to treat the large traders of the Port of Liverpool with fairness and with reason; but it was not until a few months ago, when the Manchester Ship Canal was brought to the front and when there was danger of competition, that we were able to bring the Directors of the railways which converge upon Liverpool to reason, and to secure that our representations should receive every attention. The hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment to-night—the hon. Member for Stirlingshire (Mr. J. C. Bolton)—spoke of the 25th clause as being confiscatory, and he strengthened his remarks by alluding to the provisions which have been placed in all Railway Acts since 1844, when the policy was recognized of this House retaining a power to revise the rates. Now, there is no doubt that the House of Commons has a right to revise rates, though, if the question stood simply on that ground, the House might have to consider whether there might not be compensation due to the Railway Companies by reason of any change the House might see fit to make by any such revision. But if the House will allow me to go back to that date of ancient history—namely, 1844—and to regard what was in the mind of Parliament at that time, they will see that a direct notice was given to the Railway Companies to the effect that the House of Commons had a right to revise both the classification and the rates at any time it might think fit to do so. If I may be permitted, I will read an extract from the Report of a Select Committee of this House which was made in 1846, after the introduction of this clause for the revision of all rates. The Committee reported to the House that—

> "Whilst your Committee express their regret that the public interests were so little consulted in the arrangements with railways for so long a period, they see with satisfaction the commencement of a better system in consequence of the Sessional Order of this House. Both in this and in the previous Session clauses have been introduced into all Acts relative to railways either for the construction of new lines, or the extension of old lines by purchase, reserving the power whenever it shall be deemed necessary to revise and regulate the scale of rates and charges; and as nearly all the great Railway Companies have either obtained, or applied for, Acts for the construction of new lines or the extension of old lines, they have thereby enabled Parliament to place them under such control and supervision as it may be deemed expedient to adopt; and they hope that means for securing the public against oppressive or expensive charges may yet be adopted."

That all the Railway Companies have been brought within the operation of the Act of 1884 is clear; because the bulk of the Companies that existed at that time have been either amalgamated or bought up; and when these amalgamations took place one of the conditions of the amalgamation was that this power of revision and of considering the classification of rates and tolls should be conferred upon Parliament. I feel that the great community with which I am connected is very much indebted to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) for introducing this measure; and I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will not listen to any suggestion to omit the 24th clause. If the House does not take this opportunity of settling the rates and their classification by Act of Parliament we know very well that we shall have the matter postponed in all probability for years to come, and the great value of the Bill will be lost. There is no desire, I am sure, to trench upon the rightful charges of the Railway Companies; but we cannot forget that 40 or 50 years have elapsed since the first Railway Act was passed, and a vast change has since come over the commerce of the country, and a number of articles produced or imported that were then unknown. Many alterations have been made, pretty much at the discretion of the Railway Companies, and this is the first time that the traders have had an opportunity of going before a tribunal and placing their views fairly before it. The proposal in the Bill is a very reasonable proposal, merely creating a machinery to assist this House in considering the matter itself--merely enabling a Body to make a Report which should come before the House, when it would be for the House to say that the Report was justified or not. There is another clause upon which I wish to say a word — namely, that which relates to the question of undue preference. Now, undue preference has hitherto been placed, or rather considered, too much in the light of a question between individual traders. I do not believe that the Railway Companies do show any preference between traders. I believe that, as a body, they act fairly between trader and trader; but there are many ways in which undue preference may be shown. It has been shown by the hon. Member for Stirlingshire (Mr. J. C. Bolton) that, as regards the importation of foreign meat and foreign goods, they are generally charged a less rate than the same goods produced at home; and I maintain that the same class of goods sent from one town to another, no matter where its place of production might be, ought to be carried by the Railway Companies at equal rates. There is no reason why goods brought from America, or from Hamburgh, should, when they reach Liverpool or Hull, be carried to any inland town at a less rate than the farmer or producer at that town has to pay for the conveyance of his goods. Let me take a particular instance. It is not fair that steel produced in Sheffield, and required for the construction of ships at Liverpool, should be charged one rate, while steel sent from Sheffield to Liverpool for exportation, and intended for the construction of the ships abroad, should pay another rate? Why should a different rate be paid for British material required for home manufacture than that which the foreigner who desires to import it from England has to pay? So far as I read the 25th clause, it appears to me to contain a mere pitfall for traders. It speaks of undue preference for "the same, or similar goods," and "the same, or similar services." Those are very ambiguous terms. What are similar services in the case of goods which come from foreign ports, in connection with which there is a through rate, and which are to be sent to some place in the interior? What, in such a case, are to be regarded as similar services? There is another sub-section in Clause 25 which says, that in deciding whether a lower charge does, or does not, create an undue preference, the Commissioners may, in addition to any other considerations affecting the case, take into consideration whether such charge is necessary for the purpose of securing the traffic in respect of which it is made. That makes the whole matter very easy for the Railway Companies, who will at once say—"Unless we charge the foreign producer less than the home producer we shall not secure the traffic, and, therefore, we are justified in making a reduction." What we should do is this. The Bill proposes to constitute an able, impartial, and excellent tribunal; and the clause should be so drawn that, whenever it is shown that a Railway Company is affording undue preference to any place or trade, or to any article, it should be left to that tribunal, untrammelled and without any conditions or restrictions, to hear the evidence and decide on the matter whether there has been any undue preference or not. There are many ways in which undue preference may be shown, and there is one which adds a very large sum to the cost of carriage in this country—I mean the system of railway agency. The Railway Companies have made terms with the carriers who formerly carried by the high roads. They have given to these firms a considerable rebate, amounting, I am told, to 3*s.* a ton, by way of commission upon the railway charges; and I happen to know that, in many instances, these agents, for the purpose of securing the business, have divided that rebate which they receive from the Railway Companies with the senders of the goods. Surely, that is an indirect means of affording an undue preference. I hope that the clauses will be so drawn, when the Bill leaves the Committee, as to prevent undue preference not only between different individual traders, but between the community at large. I do not advocate equal mileage rates; I think that is an impossibility; but where two towns are equi-distant from a third town, there ought to be some means of bringing the circumstances of any difference of rates and charges before the Commission, and of letting that tribunal decide whether any reason exists for giving preferential rates to one town over another. I hope the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade will persevere with the measure as it stands, and will be prepared to strengthen it in Committee.

MR. THOROLD ROGERS (Southwark, Bermondsey): I rarely take part in a railway debate; but I feel called upon to do so on this occasion, considering the very important facts which have been put before the House. I think the House ought to consider the matter very carefully before it interferes with the £800,000,000 of capital invested in railway enterprize, on which, I believe, an average dividend of 4 per cent is paid. Now, I think it is a matter for serious consideration—it is not worth while to go into all the particulars, which are better adapted for Committee—but I think it is a matter for grave consideration whether the House has intelligently made up its mind upon the second reading of a Bill which deals with such enormous interests—interests so extremely divided that I am told a very large part of the saving classes of the country have invested their capital in railway undertakings. Are we, then, to pass so important a measure without full and adequate consideration, or, at any rate, with something beyond the pitiful and peddling debate we have had to-night? There has been a very ominous combination between the two Front

Benches on this occasion which seems to bode no good. We have heard amicable words—of course with the necessary amount of vinegar infused into them—pass between my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade and his Predecessor in Office. But I heard with some astonishment that there were secret communications that had been indecently revealed. I should have thought that in a matter of such deep public interest there could be no secret communications at all; and if the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. E. Stanhope), who I see is asleep, had developed something which was likely to be useful in the national interests, I should have imagined that he would not be so mightily particular about its being communicated by his Successor. The fact is, that this is a matter of the gravest interest; and, as I said before, when I see the two Front Benches united upon any general line of action, I am disposed to believe that the public interest is likely to suffer, and is in danger of being sacrificed either to a panic, or to the cupidity of the traders and agriculturists. The hon. Member opposite the Member for North Paddington (Mr. L. Cohen) has been merciful to the House. He had before him the whole of the evidence which had been given before the Royal Commission upon the Depression of Trade; but he had read voluminous extracts from that evidence, and the gloomy views expressed in it are only what we might have expected. The inquiry, however, shows that the intelligence of the witnesses must have been incomparably higher than the intelligence of the Commission. I would warn the House against the inexpediency, in a crisis like this, of sacrificing, or running the risk of sacrificing, an enormous interest which has been created in favour of the saving classes, in order to assist in allaying a temporary panic among the trading classes. I certainly believe that the panic itself has been mightily exaggerated. I am quite ready to admit that the Manchester cotton spinners are badly off, and if the time were suitable I could give a reason for it. I believe, further, that the coal and iron industries, except in the case of intelligent men like my hon. Friend the Member for Banbury (Sir Bernhard Samuelson), are suffering, and I think a good case could be made out to show that the agricultural interest is in a state of great depression; but the depression is either temporary or remedial. I do not believe that the great mass of the industry of the country is in a state of depression. I find that pauperism is decreasing; that the deposits in the savings' banks are increasing; and that, on the whole, the extra penny of Income Tax produces as much as it did before. Of course, I shall be told that the officials at Somerset House look after it more sharply than they did. That, no doubt, is one of the explanations the panic-mongers are always prepared to offer; but I believe that one of the most mischievous things which has occurred in this country is the incessant declamation about the depression of trade, and that if the facts were really known it would be found that the public at large have been gulled. I am compelled to conclude that we ought to look with a certain amount of caution at the expedients which are unquestionably resorted to in order to maintain a rapidly declining prosperity. [*Cries of* "Question!"] With all my heart, I will come to the question at once, and I think that I shall considerably astonish some people. I am neither a Railway Director, nor do I own any notable quantity of Stock; I have a little Debenture Stock; but that would be quite safe, even if the country Gentlemen robbed the railways of all their dividends. I speak, therefore, as one who is in an absolutely secure condition, and able to speak as a disinterested person. I say, then, that we ought to consider seriously before dealing with the matter in a way which may result in the destruction or injury of an interest which is so widely distributed—more widely, I believe, than anything which is known in the shape of property in this country except Consols, whether the adoption of a Bill of this character would seriously affect Railway Stock. I have been told that about 25*s.* a month is the average receipt of every railway shareholder. The hon. Member for Stirlingshire (Mr. J. C. Bolton) and other hon. Gentlemen who are large shareholders in Railway Companies have spoken in the interests of those Companies; and having these serious facts before them, I think the House might hesitate and determine before they took action whether the course they are asked to adopt is likely to influence interests which are so widely distributed and so markedly advantageous to the country. I think it likely that a good deal of panic has been raised by the Chairmen of the various Railways, and I cannot help noticing that even the proposal of my right hon. Friend, following upon the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, who substantially agrees with it, has brought about a panic among the holders of stock which is certain to be taken advantage of by the bulls or the bears on the Stock Exchange, and which might yet bring about a considerable diminution in the resources of the holders of railway stock. How does it come to pass that the Railway Companies, with £800,000,000 of capital, only divide, as I understand, 4 per cent a-year? It is a very small dividend for a trading company, with all sorts of risks and with every conceivable contingency for diminishing the dividend—[An hon. MEMBER: They have a monopoly]—I admit the monopoly, and I will say a word about that presently. The Railway Companies are trading companies who are involved in all sorts of risks and who have a constant necessity for keeping their stock in good condition. It is extraordinary that such trading companies find themselves unable to divide all round more than 4 per cent a-year. I fancy that any hon. Gentleman engaged in business, after deducting, as is always done, 5 per cent on the capital employed in the business, would think 4 per cent a very small margin of profit. Then, how does it come to pass that 4 per cent is the average dividend upon English railway stock? I think it is due to the action of Parliament. Indeed, I am perfectly certain that it is. If the Railway Companies had been carrying goods and carrying passengers like the American railways, even when we know that the American stock is well watered, and if they received the same profits, there would be little to complain of. I have been in America myself, and I have been a spectator, although I had nothing to do with it, of the railway management of that country. The Railway Companies might, I think, have made provision for the reduction of rates and charges payable for services rendered if it had not been for the action of Parliament itself. What has Parliament done? In the first place, it has exacted prices for land which are absolutely unreasonable. Hon. Gentlemen in this House and noble Lords in "another place" sold their votes for compensation. [*Cries of* "No!"] Hon. Gentlemen who say "No!" are not old enough to recollect it. [*Cries of* "Question!"] You want to know how it comes to pass that railway stock does not pay a reasonable dividend. [An hon. MEMBER: No; we do not want to know.] Of course you do not want to know, because you are bound to continue robbing them now, just as you robbed them before.

MR. SPEAKER: The expression used by the hon. Gentleman is not a proper one.

MR. THOROLD ROGERS: Upon your ruling, Sir, I withdraw the expression at once, so far as the present generation is concerned. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] If hon. Members will only be patient, I am trying to explain how it comes to pass that railway stock has been injured and railway dividends have been so small, while, at the same time, the railway charges have been high. It must be borne in mind that there has been a vast amount of legal charge borne by the Railway Companies. That legal charge has been referred to more than once; and here I cannot help saying that although, no doubt, the expenses of prosecuting a Bill before a Parliamentary Committee upstairs are very high, I altogether differ from the right hon. Gentleman as to the value of our Parliamentary Committees. I never heard any person connected with railways express the slightest doubt that a Parliamentary Committee was the most just and fair, and, on the whole, the most useful tribunal we could have. I have heard Members who represent the railway interest allege that nothing could be more injurious to that interest than to talk of the Parliamentary Committees—Committees appointed by both Houses—as anything like a subordinate institution. I have sat on many of these Committees myself, and I have got very little more than trouble for my pains; but I am convinced that all the Members of this House and all the Members of the other House who have devoted themselves to that kind of work have done the greatest service to the country and to their fellow-beings. Well, as the property of the Railway Companies has been created in this way by Act of

Parliament, is it just for hon. Members opposite and others to seize this opportunity, when we are talking about the rights of other kinds of property created in a much more doubtful fashion, for reducing the rights of this particular property by an Act of the Legislature, simply because they believe that, certain interests being depressed, it is necessary, in consideration of those interests, to rob others? I think that this question is one which calls for the gravest possible consideration. Though, for one, I am perfectly prepared to support the second reading of the Bill, I shall, as a matter of duty, and as bearing on a question that I have constantly followed out in my work upon Committees upstairs, watch every part of the Committee stage of the measure, with the view of preventing a large mass of Her Majesty's subjects from being deprived by some operation of the law of their dividends, in consideration of the interests of manufacturers, traders, and agriculturists.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside): I think the whole House would regret, whether they are traders, manufacturers, or agriculturists, to do anything which would bear unfairly on the dividends of railway shareholders. The object of the measure we have now under consideration is not to depreciate the property of any class of the community. It is rather to make those great highways, the railways, as Mr. Cardwell once said, as free and as useful to the people as the Queen's highway, and to make them as accessible, as useful, and as valuable in promoting the best interests of the community. I have very little to complain of in the criticisms which have been passed upon the Bill. There has been a great deal in the debate this evening which is a source of gratification to me. My hon. Friend who introduced the Motion (Mr. J. C. Bolton), of course, did so in a speech which put as strongly as possible the side of those who represent the Railway Companies in this House. In that Resolution my hon. Friend expresses his willingness, and, indeed, his eagerness, to see the very kind of legislation which this Bill aims at accomplishing. His Resolution says—

> "That while this House desires legislation with the object of securing uniformity of classification of merchandize conveyed by railway, the consolidation of the toll powers of Railway Companies and such other modifications of the existing law as experience has shown to be useful and necessary."

Well, that is exactly what we are seeking to effect by this Bill. We are seeking for that uniformity of classification; we are seeking for merchandize to be conveyed in such a way as to secure the advantage of the community; we are seeking for the consolidation of the toll powers of the Railway Companies, and for such other modifications of the existing law as experience shows to be useful and necessary. There is nothing in the measure before the House that is contrary to the spirit of my hon. Friend's Resolution; and as for the apprehensions which he has expressed, they are not warranted by anything within the four corners of the Bill. My hon. Friend, in his opening statement, complained that the Railway Commission was not intended to do justice between the litigant parties with whom they have to deal; but that what was really desired was that it should really do injustice to the Railway Companies, and promote the interests of the traders, and that something which I myself had said in introducing the Bill warranted him in making that imputation. Now, what was it that I said? What I really said with respect to the Railway Commission was that we propose to give it more extensive powers, that its powers hitherto have been too restricted; that the jurisdiction of the Commission has been considerably limited since its appointment by the action of the Courts of Law; and that, through the power which those Courts possess of limiting the jurisdiction of the Commissioners by prohibition, and *certiorari* the usefulness of the Commission has been impaired, but that, nevertheless, they have really done good service to the community, I am at a loss to know what my hon. Friend finds in that statement that is a reflection on the Railway Commission. We acknowledge, as has been handsomely done on both sides, the great services which the Commission has rendered; and we are only anxious that the Commission should do further service. The right hon. Gentleman who preceded me at the Board of Trade (Mr. E. Stanhope), if he will allow me to quote his words, said that—

> "The Commission has done excellent service; but what we have to complain of is that it has

not enough power, and it would do more if it had greater power."

That is precisely the object of the Bill, to which I think the House has given a most favourable reception. My hon. Friend (Mr. J. C. Bolton) objects to Local Authorities having a *locus standi* before the Commission. I should like to ask on what reasonable ground can an objection be taken to the proposal made in the 13th clause that Local Authorities should have the right to appear before the Railway Commission, although they may be directly suffering damage? My hon. Friend complains that the Board of Trade proposes to give certificates to those local associations—associations of traders or agriculturists—which are not Corporate Bodies. Now, it is well known that the Chambers of Agriculture are not incorporated societies, and there ought to be some guarantee that they are *bonâ fide* associations when they come before the Railway Commissioners to prosecute their claims; and in order that some half-dozen persons should not call themselves a Chamber of Commerce or of Agriculture, it is considered necessary that the Board of Trade should give a certificate that they are a proper Body to prosecute their complaint before the Railway Commission. I cannot, therefore, see on what ground my hon. Friend could object to that.

MR. J. C. BOLTON: I did not object.

MR. MUNDELLA: I am glad to hear my hon. Friend say that he does not object; but my hon. Friend said that the Local Authorities might come before the Commission and put the Railway Companies to considerable expense, and that, after all, the expense would have to come out of the rates, whereby the Companies would probably have to defray them.

MR. J. C. BOLTON: What I said was, that I did not care how many of these associations were entitled to prosecute the Railway Companies, provided they had to pay their own expenses; but I objected to the right being conferred on Corporate Bodies to prosecute the Railway Companies at the expense of somebody else.

MR. MUNDELLA: My hon. Friend stated that the Railway Companies paid the larger part of the rates, and the result might be the Railway Companies would be prosecuted by the Local Authorities, and, in any case, would have to pay the larger part of the costs awarded against the Local Authorities. There never was a greater mistake than that. The Railway Companies only pay a little over £1,250,000 out of some £40,000,000 of rates, and no Local Authority would go before the Railway Commissioners without paying their fair share of the costs. I take the sum paid from a letter which appeared in *The Times* yesterday, and in which the writer states the sums which have been paid in parochial rates and taxes by the Railway Companies during the last 13 years. The contention, therefore, of my hon. Friend cannot hold water; and, so far from taking exception to a *locus standi* being given to these Bodies before the Railway Commission, I hope that the House will stand at least by that clause. My hon. Friend also objects not only to Clause 17, which extends the jurisdiction of the Commissioners, but to some of the other clauses of the Bill. I do not propose to detain the House at any length to-night. For my own part, I am prepared to say that I believe the 1st section of Clause 78, which empowers any person sending goods by railway to make a complaint to the Board of Trade if he thinks that he is being oppressively or unreasonably treated, is one of the most valuable provisions of the Bill. All the communications which I have received upon the subject tend to convince me that the establishment of such a Commission, which is not in reality a Commission, and which does not confer any considerable power upon the Board of Trade, but simply enables them to investigate complaints and endeavour to arrive at an amicable settlement, will have a better effect than any amount of litigation that may take place. A similar plan of Commissions is adopted in America, and is alluded to by the President of the Republic of that country in his last Report, of April 2, upon the Labour Question, as having had an important bearing upon the question of Railway Rates. He says that the usefulness of such Commissions has been fully proved in the labour disputes, and he adds that the exceeding good which has been accomplished by these Commissions has been recognized by many of the States, and although possessing little more than advising power, they have exercised a most salutary influence. He says, further, that he believes more good has resulted to the trading people of America, and to the Railway Companies, from the institution of these Commissions than from the expenditure of millions of money in litigation in that country. I come now to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. E. Stanhope) who preceded me in the Office I have the honour to hold. I can assure the House that I refer to it with extreme regret. I think the right hon. Gentleman made observations which were not only unusual, but which I think he will see were wholly unwarrantable. When I entered the Office—I think in the month of February—I found no secret Memorandum, no confidential communication from the right hon. Gentleman, but I had placed in my hand a Railway Bill—simply a Railway Bill. [Mr. E. Stanhope: A final revision.] Yes; I have seen no other. I have seen no other communication whatever, except the sixth and final draft of a revised Railway Bill which had been circulated to the late Cabinet.

Mr. E. STANHOPE: No doubt there was the sixth revision, and it was marked "confidential."

Mr. MUNDELLA: I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon. It was not marked "confidential." It came to me as the sixth and final revise, as settled by the Cabinet. Before I ever made any reference to that measure, either publicly or privately, almost before I had an opportunity of considering its contents and provisions, the right hon. Gentleman himself went to Sheffield and addressed an audience there, stating that he was about to bring in such a Bill immediately. The right hon. Gentleman made a long speech, detailing the provisions of this secret and private Memorandum. That speech was made three weeks before I introduced my Bill; but when I did introduce it I felt it was only due to the right hon. Gentleman—as I felt ashamed to take upon myself the credit which did not belong to me—to make a full acknowledgment of the valuable services rendered by the right hon. Gentleman. I did not, however, shrink from my own responsibility. For every word and clause in the Bill I am responsible. Further than that, I explained in this House, in a speech which I have before me, the difference between the provisions of my Bill and of that of the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman can see himself, as to the 24th clause, of which he speaks of my having made a secret revelation, that a few days ago I explained the change which has taken place in drafting between the Bill I introduced to the House and the measure the right hon. Gentleman himself proposed. I showed that we had changed those who were to consider the classification of rates from one party to the other. I consulted the Railway Commissioners, and they themselves felt they were not the right parties to take over legislative powers, that legislation was not their function, they being a Court of Law. They felt that the questions of the classifications and the minima were questions to be settled by business men as business men with each other, and that all that was necessary was that there should be some intermediary to bring these people together, and to say in what class, A or B, certain rates should be put, and so on. I hope it is unnecessary for me to trouble the House any further with any personal matter. I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that there was no intentional or unintentional discourtesy on my part, and that I have been all along only too anxious to acknowledge every assistance I have received from him in this matter. I have received assistance from him again to-night in the very valuable speech he has delivered, and I very much regret that he should have indulged in any ebullition of the kind we have witnessed. I regret it the more, because, here, I hold in my hand a speech of his making exactly the same announcement as that I made myself, which speech was delivered almost a fortnight before I began the consideration of the question. The right hon. Gentleman considers there is legitimate cause for complaint on the part of the traders. My hon. Friend (Mr. J. C. Bolton), however, will not admit, and in his speech did not admit, that there was any kind of complaint on the part of traders which justified the bringing in of the Bill. With great respect to him, a well-known Railway Chairman and Director, I say that I do not believe Railway Chairmen and Directors are aware of the amount of justification there is for the complaints made by the traders. I believe the anomalies that exist only want bringing to light. I believe that if we only once could get the light of public opinion turned on them, we should have them more than half-redressed immediately. I do not want to weary the House, after 12 o'clock at night, with a long statement of cases; but I think we have numbers of cases, all of them of an indubitable character, showing the extraordinary and unreasonable nature of the railway charges. The complaints made cannot be untrue, and I fail to see any reason why cases of this kind should happen. I hold in my hand a letter from a constituent of my own, who has dealt largely in cattle in Yorkshire. He states that if he goes into the Newcastle market and buys two lots of cattle, one British and the other foreign, he will have to pay something like 40 per cent more for the carriage of the British cattle then he does for the carriage of the foreign cattle to Wakefield, Chesterfield, Sheffield, or wherever else he may have to send them to. What reasonable justification can there be for such a state of things as that? It is useless to say that this is part of a through route. If the Railway Companies were bringing cattle from Sweden and Denmark on their own steamers, and then carrying them into the heart of the country, there might be some justification for the difference in the rate charged—there might be some reason for charging a lower *pro ratâ* rate from the one district. But that is not the case. The Danish steamers bring the Danish cattle to the Newcastle market, just as the British farmer brings his cattle there. The only difference is, that on one side of the water the foreign cattle are put into the lairs, and on the other side the British cattle are put into the market. The foreign cattle are taken out of the lairs, and are put into the market, and if they are sold, they are carried at a certain reduced rate. If not sold, they are taken back to the lairs, whence they can be removed into the interior at the reduced rate. I do not wonder that this has proved exasperating to a good many people. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Leicestershire made an excellent speech to-night with respect to the necessity of through rates where there are a number of Railway Companies. The constant complaint is that because there are two or three Railway Companies intervening between point and point, therefore you cannot get through rates, and you have the most unreasonable rates prevailing, something like toll-bar charges at various junctions. Why should that be so? Here is another complaint — from Mr. George Broomhead, who does some farming. He says—

> "I received a truck of coprolites from Cambridge at a place near Sheffield, a journey of 128 miles, and the cost of bringing this in a truck only containing nine tons of this material was £7 2*s.* 6*d.*"

£7 2*s.* 6*d.* for bringing nine tons of a fertilizer from Cambridge to within a short distance of Sheffield! A complaint was made to the Railway Company, but what is their answer? They say that the coprolites had to pass over three railways—namely, the Great Eastern, the Great Northern, and the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire. The coprolite dealer says that in consequence of the excessive cost of carriage, his trade has greatly fallen off, and he is about to turn his mills into cement mills. Surely that is a question of classification, and one of the things that requires dealing with under this Bill. That is, however, a matter which I think my hon. Friend wishes us to take out of the Bill, and to leave entirely in the hands of the Railway Companies. I have a series of letters from different firms. I have received complaints from a firm at Staveley which spends £250,000 a-year on railway rates. They complain that because goods pass over two or three different railways, exorbitant tolls are levied; whereas, if they passed over only one railway, the toll would be considerably less. Now, all this has to be dealt with, and the circumstances are exasperating to the trading community. Here is a complaint I received only two days ago from Alderman Smethurst, of Bury, in Lancashire. He is a large consumer of indigo. He has been accustomed to get his indigo by way of London; but, recently, he has imported it from Calcutta to Liverpool. What do the Railway Companies charge for the carriage of this indigo? At one time he imported 45 tons of this indigo in chests, and he was charged £1 6*s.* 8*d.* per ton for its carriage—a distance of 36 miles—from Liverpool to Bury. But if he had sent 45 tons of American meat, a much more difficult thing to handle, much less solid, and much more difficult to pack, from Liverpool to London, it would have cost him 25*s*. per ton. It is £1 6*s*. 8*d*. per ton from Liverpool to Bury for indigo; and the result, this gentleman tells me, is that he is actually carting his indigo by road, as being a cheaper means of carriage than by railway. And it must be borne in mind that in this case there is only one railway concerned—there are not two or three lines to be traversed. I understand they are also carting cotton yarns over the same route, because of the unreasonable railway charges. I call it most extraordinary that, with the wonderful railway facilities we have in this country, we should have complaints of this description constantly made. It shows the great need there is for some such measure as that now before the House. Now, the right hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. Plunket) gave a very excellent and a very general support to the Bill. He has, however, expressed an objection to the substitution of a Judge to act as President of the Court. He prefers a lawyer to a Judge. I stated, when I introduced the Bill, that I had no strong preference in the matter. I am only anxious that whatever can be done shall be done to secure the very best possible results at the cheapest rate. The statement made by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Wight (Sir Richard Webster)—and he has contributed valuable speeches on this subject on both occasions it has been before the House, and we are always glad to hear what he has to say on the question, seeing that no one is fairer and more impartial or more judicial in his communications to this House—the hon. and learned Gentleman, I say, stated that it would be to the interests of suitors and the Railway Companies, and would give brevity to the proceedings and conduce to confidence in the decisions, if a Judge were appointed, instead of a trained lawyer. I have never found a lawyer get up in the House to advocate the other view. The right hon. and learned Gentleman made a suggestion which I do not doubt may be a valuable one—namely, that the Railway Commission should do something towards relieving the House of its present railway business. That is a question entirely for the House, and is, I am afraid, much too large a one to introduce into a Railway Bill. I feel that whatever the Commission that is appointed may be, and however we may feel it desirable to utilize it for other purposes, we could not at this stage, or, indeed, in this Bill, do any such thing. As I understood the right hon. and learned Gentleman, he is quite in favour of our undertaking the duty of classification and revision of rates, or of adjusting the maxima. But if he is so, I would ask how it is to be done? Is it to be done by the Commission, or should it be done through the medium of the Board of Trade? I confess I believe the Board of Trade is a better medium for its accomplishment, and until there is a strong opinion shown in the House against it, I shall maintain that view. The question which has attracted the greatest attention to-night is the question of Clause 24. My hon. Friend who moved this Resolution is afraid of what he calls the confiscatory effect of the clause on the dividends of the shareholders and the profits of the Railway Companies. I may say at once I am sure it was not contemplated by the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. E. Stanhope), and that no such result has been contemplated by the Board of Trade. The main object of that provision was to bring about that classification and that readjustment of rates which was so strongly recommended by the Committee of 1882. It is a *sine quâ non*, if you are to have this business properly done, that there shall be a new classification. I do not attach—I never did attach—that great value to Clause 24 which some hon. Gentlemen do in this House. I do not think it will affect traders much, although some of them seem to think that it will. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Ormskirk (Mr. Forwood), who regarded it as the great central principle and the great advantage of the Bill, does not concur entirely in that proposition; and, perhaps, I was a little too strong in the way I put it. The fixing of the maximum rates will not, in my opinion, make any great difference in the rates at which the Companies can perform their services for the carriage of traffic; but it will prevent many of those anomalies and injustices which bear so hardly at present on every section of the community. It will prevent that friction which everyone desires to see prevented; and I believe the sooner the question is settled the better for the Companies and the public. It is with a view to such a settlement that we desire to see a good classification and a suitable maximum arrived at. If I can do anything before we enter into Committee, having due regard to the interests of the Companies, to meet the just susceptibilities of those concerned, and to relieve them of their ideas of confiscation, I shall be glad to meet them half-way and consider how we can bring about reasonable, fair, and just results to the traders without involving injury to the Railway Companies. On the subject of canals, to which the right hon. Gentleman referred, I believe great mischief has been done to the trading community by the engrossing of the canals by the Railway Companies. I think there are few matters about which the trading classes have more right to complain than the way in which the Railway Companies have strangled, so to speak, the canals. We were the first country in the world to begin the canal system. An enormous sum—from £40,000,000 to £60,000,000—was spent on them at the beginning of the century, and with what result? Why, that canals are to-day, in this country, to a large extent, idle; a great many of them are in a state of disrepair; many of them are silting up. Even where that is not the case the Railway Companies have, directly or indirectly, got their hand upon some section of the canal, and have so prevented the whole system from working satisfactorily and to the advantage of the community. I feel that the clauses in the Bill dealing with canals are not adequate for the work to be done; and I hope, before we go into Committee, to put clauses on the Paper which will, as far as possible, meet the necessities of the case. Individual canals are too much under the restriction of the Railway Companies, and are not put on their proper footing in the traffic system of the country. It is a strange thing that it is in this country alone that there has been no kind of improvement in the system of hauling on canals. On the Continent they have introduced endless chains and tug steamers, and you can see canals actively at work for 500 miles—for instance, from Bohemia to Hamburg. You can see them being utilized with the greatest possible benefit. In this country, on the other hand, canals seem to have become almost obsolete, and there has been no kind of progress in respect of them. Some remarks have been made by hon. Members in various quarters of the House as to Clause 28; but I will tell the House that merely to institute a Railway Commission to lay down rules as to railway charges and then to leave the public to litigation would not be of much use. I do not want to say hard things of the Railway Companies; but I would point out that with their immense capital it would require no great effort on their part to lay aside £20,000 or £30,000 for litigation. ["No, no!"] At any rate, the Railway Companies will not be so susceptible to the inconveniences of litigation as the trading classes, even when represented by Chambers of Commerce, and such like institutions. I know very well that it is one thing for a Railway Company to defend a law suit, and another thing for traders, whether represented by Chambers of Commerce or Associations, to bring an action against a railway. What we want to do is to get rid of friction and litigation, as far as possible, and we believe that will be best effected by Clause 28. In my opinion the mere introduction of this Bill has accomplished good results. My hon. Friends know very well that the Companies have been very much more ready to meet their clients than heretofore. ["No, no!"] Yes; that is so. Already some considerable concessions have been made. In the South Staffordshire district, for instance, considerable alterations have taken place in the rates. The Companies are meeting the trading community in a much more reasonable spirit than they were accustomed to do formerly; and I believe that if you can only get a thorough discussion of the question in this country, if you can only get plenty of light thrown on the matter, the grievances complained of are already more than half-redressed. I believe that if we can only have such an investigation and Report as is provided for in the 28th clause, we shall get rid of more than half the difficulty which the community now has to face. The right hon. Gentleman opposite the Member for West Bristol (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) spoke of the Board of Trade as the very worst Body to undertake such an investigation. He has a very bad opinion of the Board of Trade. He complained of its having done too little. The Board of Trade has done nothing as to Railway Companies, except to act as a means for laying down the law. But there are many who hold a different opinion. Mr. Samuel Laing, who sat in this House for many years, and spoke on the subject of railways with as much authority as anyone, has written an excellent article in *The Fortnightly Review* for April which distinctly points to the necessity of more Government supervision over the railways than we have had hitherto. He says he is most anxious that this control shall be placed in the hands of a Body which shall be represented by a Cabinet Minister. He says that all parties would then feel confident that no arbitrary or repressive action would be taken against them, at any rate, knowingly, as no Minister will dare do anything that cannot be successfully defended in the House of Commons after full debate and discussion. He says the Board of Trade is clearly the proper Department for exercising this general sort of supervision between the railways and the public; and then he goes on to state the reasons why. I would call attention the more to this because of the view taken by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol. This is one of the most enlightened articles that has ever been written by anyone connected with the Companies; and the writer takes a contrary view to the right hon. Gentleman, and says that the Board of Trade is clearly the proper Department for exercising this general sort of supervision between the Companies and the public. It already has a staff of officials and Inspectors well versed in railway matters, and it could easily add assessors thoroughly acquainted with the question. The writer has none of the apprehensions of my hon. Friend behind me as to the operation of the 24th clause. He says—

> "Since the above was written, Mr. Mundella's Bill has been introduced, and so far as I can judge, as a first impression, it seems very much to follow the lines I have indicated. I, for one, do not view with any alarm the mediatory and arbitrating powers being vested in the Board of Trade."

But, then, this is not a new thing. That the Board of Trade should undertake this work was recommended as far back as 1852 by one of the most important Committees that ever sat in this House. In 1854, in introducing his great measure to the House—the Railway and Canal Traffic Act—Mr. Cardwell said that this was one of the recommendations of the Committee on which no fewer than five persons who had filled the Office of President of the Board of Trade had sat. He said that this was one of the points upon which there had been perfect unanimity. He concludes with these words—I will not read the whole of it—

> "And that where a complaint arises that any Company has violated any of their obligations, provision shall be made for the hearing of this complaint."

Well, Sir, that admirable speech of Mr. Cardwell's foreshadowed how needful it was to meet the evils of the railway system that then existed. It is 32 years since Mr. Cardwell stood at this Table to introduce his measure, and it is rather a lamentable thing to consider how much remains yet to be done to make our railway system as effectual for public service as he—in one of the most admirable speeches that was ever made in this House on the subject—held it should be. There is nothing more that I ought to trouble the House with at this late hour of the morning. I can only say that though the hon. Gentleman behind me seemed to think that liberal dealing with the public by the Railway Companies had not resulted in liberal result to the Companies themselves—well, I am bound to say that the Midland Railway Company are not of my hon. Friend's opinion. The Companies that have adopted the cheap passenger system that was adopted by the Midland Railway Company some years ago, and the Midland Company itself, have reaped great advantage from the system, while the public have reaped untold advantage. What has happened within the past three or four years? The Parcels Post has been instituted—not by the goodwill of the Companies, for they drove rather a hard bargain with the public—["No, no!"] Yes; and the late Mr. Fawcett thought it was a hard bargain. They exacted, I think, 55 per cent of the whole receipts from the public. What has been the result of the introduction of these interesting facilities and this cheapening of the method of communication? Why, within the past year 26,000,000 parcels have been conveyed by the Post Office, bringing in receipts amounting to nearly £600,000. The Railway Companies have received nearly £300,000 from the Post Office. And what effect has it had upon their own parcel traffic? Why, the receipts from it have not diminished at all. The Companies are competing with the Parcels Post—I have been astonished to see some of the changes they have made in their rates in Sheffield. I find there has been a reduction of from 50 to 70 per cent in the rates for the conveyance of some of the parcels as compared with former charges; and yet, though the public have derived great advantage, the Companies have not diminished their own receipts. We all know the great advantages that have accrued to the public from the great facilities that the Parcels Post has given. I believe that just in proportion as the Railway Companies in carrying their traffic deal fairly with the public they will find they confer benefit on their shareholders. I hope the House will allow this Bill to be read a second time without opposition, so that it may be considered in Committee. This is not a Party question as between one side of the House and the other; and I, therefore, trust we shall do all we can to pass the measure during the present Session, and thus confer an immense benefit on the trading community.

MR. J. C. BOLTON: I wish to ask for an explanation from the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) to enable me, if I possibly can, to save the House from the trouble of a division. If I am to understand from the remarks which he made that regard will be had to the statutory power of the Railway Companies to appear before the Railway Commissioners, I shall then be perfectly satisfied with the discussion which has taken place, and shall ask leave to withdraw my Amendment.

MR. MUNDELLA: I do not think that I can add anything to what I stated in the few remarks which I have already made. I cannot at this moment be called upon to state categorically what I intend doing, and how I intend to meet the views of the Railway Companies; but I can say this—that I will do my best to make such an arrangement with the Railway Companies as will remove those apprehensions of confiscation to which they give utterance, but which it is difficult to believe they really entertain.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Question put, "That the Bill be now read a second time," and *agreed to.*

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Tuesday* next.

CROFTERS (SCOTLAND) (No. 2) BILL.

(*Mr. Trevelyan, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.*)

[BILL 200.] CONSIDERATION.

Bill, as amended, *considered.*

Amendments made.

Clause 6 (Fixed rent).

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to move, on page 4, at end, to add—

> "Provided, That, if within the term for which any rents are fixed under the provisions of this section, it shall appear to the Land Commission that, owing to excessive failure of crops and stock, great changes of value, or other causes which could not be foreseen, and which operate either generally or in particular areas, rents previously fair have become unfair and inequitable, and cannot be paid, the Land Commission may, with the consent of the Secretary for Scotland previously obtained, declare that rents may be revised, and abatements or suspensions may be granted, on due cause shown, either generally or in a specified area. And, after the issue of such declaration, any crofter, or any body of crofters, in any particular area, may apply to the Land Commission for revision, abatement, or suspension of rent. Upon such application, after due inquiry, and hearing the parties, the Land Commission may either revise and alter the rents or grant any abatement, for any specified term, or may suspend the whole or any portion of the rent, and direct on what dates, and in what instalments, such suspended rent is to be paid."

This Amendment is a revival of a question which was raised in Committee, but was not then settled at that time. The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) suggested that the matter should be left over until Report, and I think I understood the right hon. and learned Gentleman to give a pledge that he would prepare a clause to meet the case at this stage; but I do not see that anything of the kind appears on the Paper. I admit that the matter has been very much facilitated by the Amendment under which the rent of the crofter is to be fixed every seven years, instead of every 15 years; but I do not think it altogether meets the case, and I need not go further than the Irish Land Act. In 1881 an Act was passed for Ireland, under which judicial rents were fixed, and I think we all know the failure which has taken place under it. I am inclined to think that if there had been in the Irish Land Act words of this sort introduced, the difficulties which we have since experienced might have been obviated. What I desire is to leave it open that if, in the words of the Amendment, owing to excessive failure of crops and stock, great changes of value, or other causes which could not be foreseen, and which operate generally or in particular areas, rents previously fair have become unfair and inequitable and cannot be paid, they may be revised and resettled. The object of this Amendment, therefore, is to enable the Government to declare that such necessity has arisen, and that the revision may take place. It is impossible for me, of course, to press this Amendment unless the House is prepared to accept it; but I think the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate made some promise that he would consider this matter of providing that the rent may be altered in the event of these great changes happening, and my belief is that if anything of the kind is to be provided, it can only be done in the way I propose. Therefore, I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name, and I hope it will receive the favourable consideration of Her Majesty's Government.

Amendment proposed,

In page 4, line 30, after the word "payable," to insert the words—"Provided, That, if within the term for which any rents are fixed under the provisions of this section, it shall appear to the Land Commission that, owing to excessive failure of crops and stock, great changes of value, or other causes which could not be foreseen, and which operate either generally or in particular areas, rents previously fair have become unfair and inequitable, and cannot be paid, the Land Commission may, with the consent of the Secretary for Scotland previously obtained, declare that rents may be revised, and abatements or suspensions may be granted, on due cause shown, either generally or in a specified area. And, after the issue of such declaration, any crofter, or any body of crofters, in any particular area, may apply to the Land Commission for revision, abatement, or suspension of rent. Upon such application, after due inquiry, and hearing the parties, the Land Commission may either revise and alter the rents or grant any abatement, for any specified term, or may suspend the whole or any portion of the rent, and direct on what dates, and in what instalments, such suspended rent is to be paid."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I am not going into this matter at any length; but I should like just to say that what my hon. Friend has said, as to my having promised to consider this question and prepare a clause, is entirely correct. We have considered the matter very fully; but the more we thought of it, and the more we conferred upon it, the more apparent it seemed to become that it was not practicable in regard to this class of small holdings. I took the opportunity of consulting my hon. Friend the Member for the Woodbridge Division of Suffolk (Mr. Everett), and, after full consultation, we came to the conclusion that it is impossible to apply this system to these small crofters' holdings. Therefore, I did not put the clause which I had prepared on the Paper, and I venture to say that the almost universal sense of those who are best qualified to know is that the system would not be practicable in this case. With regard to the proposal of my hon. Friend (Sir George Campbell), I think it is quite sufficiently met, for all practicable purposes, by the limitation of the statutory period to seven years. There would be a great deal to be said in favour of such an Amendment as this if the statutory period was 19 or 20 years; but, under the present circumstances, it is hardly possible that anything but a great calamity could make such artificial machinery as this workable. I am afraid it would not be workable, and therefore I cannot accept it.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 8 (Compensation to crofter for improvements on removal).

On the Motion of The Lord Advocate, the following Amendment made:—In page 5, line 4, leave out "tenant," and insert "crofter."

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to move, at the end of the clause, to add "for valuable consideration." This Amendment is comparatively a small one, but I think it is of some importance, and the effect of it is to put the Scotch crofter in the same position as the Irish tenant stood in the Irish Land Act. We all know that there are cases in which printed forms of agreement, containing clauses requiring the tenants to do all kinds of things, are used, and are signed by the tenant without knowing the full effect of what he is doing. Therefore, I think that a provision should be inserted similar to that contained in the Irish Land Act—namely, that the agreement should be for a valuable consideration.

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 5, after the word "improvements," insert the words "for valuable consideration."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): It appears to me that this Amendment is entirely unnecessary, because, as the clause now stands, with the Amendment introduced into it by the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay), it must be "by specific agreement in writing;" and, no doubt, a tenant would not consent to sign a specific agreement in writing, unless it was for some valuable consideration of tenancy or other matter.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 15, to leave out "the stipulations of a lease or in virtue of."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question, "That those words stand part of the Clause," put, and *negatived.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 10 (Principle of valuation).

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I beg to move, in page 5, line 24, to add—

> "And the value of any deterioration committed or permitted by the tenant within the four years preceding shall also be deducted from the said compensation."

In the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883 there is a limitation of four years, and therefore we have adopted that period, which I think is quite long enough, having regard to the principle that if the landlord has any claims of this sort he should not be allowed to allow them to stand over to an unlimited period of time. Therefore, I propose to insert the words which I have moved.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 5, line 24, add—"and the value of any deterioration committed or permitted by the tenant within the four years preceding shall also be deducted from the said compensation.—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I think that four years is altogether too long a period. If a landlord is looking after his property as he ought to do, he should not allow deterioration to go on for four years, and therefore I propose to amend the Amendment by inserting the word "two" instead of "four."

Amendment proposed, to amend the said Amendment, by leaving out the word "four," and inserting the word "two" instead thereof.—(*Mr. J. W. Barclay.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'four' stand part of the proposed Amendment."

MR. M'CULLOCH (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I think the period should be restricted to one year. Four years might be reasonable, if leases were not always made in the interest of the landlord; but, under those circumstances, the case is altogether different, and one year is quite long enough.

SIR. JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.): We do not know anything of the kind. We know that leases are more in favour of the tenant. We know, moreover, that the landlord sometimes allows deterioration to go on in bad times, in order to assist the tenant, and in the hope that when better times come he will be able to put matters all right again.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I shall be perfectly willing to accept "two years" if there is any general feeling in the House in favour of it; but, at the same time, I would point out again, that four years is the period fixed in the Agricultural Holdings Act.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I must point out that "four years" is the period contained in the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act also. I would point out also, that if the Amendment as it appears on the Paper were passed, the landlord and the tenant would be placed on exactly the same footing; but the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate proposes to amend that by binding the landlord to four years, and not binding the tenant in any way. I do not oppose that inequality, because it already exists in the other Act; but I should strongly object to the right hon. and learned Gentleman going further than that, and inserting "two years" as has been proposed.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY: Whatever the restriction, the landlord has still his rights at Common Law.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Question, "That those words be there added," put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 13 (Available land).

On the Motion of The Lord Advocate, the following Amendment made:—In page 6, line 30, leave out "it fulfils the following conditions, namely."

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to move, in page 7, line 36, to leave out "fifteen," and insert "thirty." This is an Amendment which I propose because I feel bound to give the House an opportunity of reconsidering what I think is an extremely grave blot on the Bill. The benefits of the Bill are extended to existing rents of £30 per annum; but when we come to consider the question of the enlargement of holdings, we find the anomaly that the enlargement must be limited to £15 per annum. A farm of £15 a-year is something more than a croft, and at the same time, it is not "a small farm" on which a man could live without other work. I therefore move the Amendment of which I have given Notice.

Amendment proposed, in page 7, line 36, to leave out the word "fifteen," and insert the word "thirty,"—(*Sir George Campbell,*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the word 'fifteen' stand part of the Bill."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): My hon. Friend says this is an anomaly; that he does not see why it was introduced. Well, I can tell him that it was introduced on the recommendation of the Crofters' Commission. They recommended £30 as the maximum, and we accepted it. £30 is certainly far above any croft; but while they took that as the maximum they recommended that no enlargement should be made beyond the limit of £15. The Commissioners thought, and I think quite fairly so, that the Court should not be compelled to enlarge the crofters' holdings up to the maximum rent which came under the Act, when it is very well known that a holding of £15 a-year is already far beyond what can properly be called a croft.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 16 (Bequest of holding).

On the Motion of The Lord Advocate, the following Amendments made:—In page 9, line 3, after ("f,") insert "Where the legatee shall have presented a petition to the sheriff as aforesaid, the legatee," and leave out "this section the legatee."

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 18 (Area covered by Act).

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I beg to move an Amendment, in page 9, line 33, after "Ross," to insert "and Cromarty." I do not suppose the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate can have any objection to the proposal, as the omission of Cromarty must have been an oversight.

Amendment proposed, in page 9, line 33, after "Ross," insert "and Cromarty."—(*Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh.*)

Question proposed, "That 'and Cromarty' be there inserted."

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I assent to this Amendment. It was, as the hon. Member says, an oversight on my part. As a matter of fact, there are six or eight bits of Cromarty dotted through the county of Ross.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Sir DONALD CURRIE (Perth, W.): I beg to move, as an Amendment, in page 9, line 33, after "Caithness," to insert "Perth." The hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) moved, in Committee, that several counties, including Perth, should be added. The fact of other counties being proposed, in addition to Perth, no doubt destroyed the chance of that county having the advantage of the Bill. I propose, after "Caithness," to insert "Perth."

Amendment proposed, in page 9, line 33, after the word "Caithness," insert the word "Perth."—(*Sir Donald Currie.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'Perth' be there inserted."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): It is quite impossible for us to accept this Amendment. The whole matter was argued and discussed and divided upon in Committee; therefore I will not detain the House with any observations upon it.

Question put, and *negatived.*

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): After the fate which has attended the proposal to include the county of Perth, it is probably not worth while suggesting the inclusion of Aberdeen, though the case to be made out for this county is as strong, if not stronger, than any case which can be made out for Perth. On a former occasion the opportunity of making this proposal was governed by the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay). But the case of Aberdeenshire is so strong that I should not be doing my duty to my constituents, who are so anxious to be included in the Bill, if I did not bring forward this Amendment. There are properties in this county which fulfil every one of the conditions named in the Bill.

Amendment proposed, in page 9, line 33, after the word "Caithness," insert the word "Aberdeen." — (*Dr. Farquharson.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'Aberdeen' be there inserted."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): It is impossible to accept this.

Question put, and *negatived.*

On the Motion of The LORD ADVOCATE, the following Amendment made:—In page 10, after line 6, insert—

"In the event of the heirs at law of the crofter being heirs portioners, the eldest of such heirs portioners shall succeed to the tenancy without division."

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 22 (Delegation of Commissioners' duties).

Amendment proposed, in page 11, line 4, to leave out the words "seventeenth and eighteenth," and insert the words "nineteenth and twentieth." — (*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'seventeenth and eighteenth' stand part of the Clause."

MR. DONALD CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): I would suggest that "seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth" be omitted altogether. The right hon. and learned Gentleman will agree with me, that it is not usual to refer to particular clauses in that way. There are other clauses in which I should think he intends to allow the Commissioners some discretion. There is the 23rd clause, as to expenses, for instance.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: Probably the two sections named could safely be deleted with the others.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman propose to leave out "nineteenth and twentieth" as well?

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: Yes.

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause," put, and *negatived.*

On the Motion of Mr. DONALD CRAWFORD, the following Amendments made:—In page 11, line 4, leave out "the;" and in line 5, leave out "section of."

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 26 (Record of proceedings, &c.)

On the Motion of The LORD ADVOCATE, the following Amendment made:—

In page 11, after line 31, insert,—"In any county to which this Act applies which is divided into districts for judicial purposes, the 'Crofters Holdings Book,' applicable to the holdings within any district in which there is a resident sheriff clerk or sheriff clerk depute having an office, shall be kept by the sheriff clerk or sheriff clerk depute resident within the district."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 31 (Loans for the purchase and equipment of fishing boats).

Amendment proposed, in page 12, line 32, after "counties," leave out "embraced in this Act," and insert "to which this Act applies."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause," put, and *negatived.*

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 33 (Definitions).

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I do not know whether there is any possibility of any Amendmend at all valuable to the crofter being accepted; but, if such a thing is possible, it will surely be with regard to the Amendment I am about to move—namely, after "resides on," in line 35, to insert "or near." The definition of crofter in this clause is "a tenant from year to year, and resides on his holding." It was pointed out that very often a crofter does not reside on his holding, but in a village close by. A good many Amendments were moved on this point in Committee, and there was a good deal of discussion about it, but no settlement was arrived at. I propose to settle the matter in the simple way I have described, so as to make the clause read that the word crofter shall mean a "tenant from year to year who resides on or near his holding."

Amendment proposed, in page 13, line 35, after the word "on," to insert the words "or near."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'or near' be there inserted."

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I hope the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate will accept the Amendment. We had a considerable amount of discussion on it when the Bill was in Committee, and I understood, when I moved an Amendment of a similar kind, that the Lord Advocate promised to give the matter favourable consideration before Report. There can be no doubt that if the words of the Bill are adhered to they will cut out a great many people on arbitrary grounds for no special reason at all. I think words could be selected which would indicate the hon. Member's idea more clearly, but I would strongly urge the Lord Advocate to accept an Amendment in the sense of the hon. Member's proposal. It is clear that some crofters may have two pieces of ground not exactly contiguous to each other, and it would not be just to exclude them from the privileges of the Bill if they should not happen to reside on a certain one.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): This matter in its larger sense was very fully discussed, no doubt, and I think the general feeling of the House, as manifested by a division, was that it would not be right to prevent a person from having the benefits of the Act from the mere fact of his house being a little distance from his pasture land, if he really was a crofter; and to meet that case I have put an Amendment on the Paper three lines lower down, as follows:—to insert, after "Act," in line 17 of page 14, "including the site of his dwelling-house and any offices or other conveniences connected therewith," so that if under the same contract he holds, let us say, a house in a village and has his land a little way off, he still would be under the Bill, which probably he would not be if the Bill stands as it is at present. But the words "on or near" will take away the safeguard that the man must be a crofter. If a man having £10,000 a-year were in possession of a croft, he would, under the words proposed, be able to claim an addition to it. You would have no security that the man is a crofter at all. I think the words I propose will do what the hon. Member desires, whilst it will not disturb the safeguard to which I refer.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.): I myself had an Amendment on this subject when the Bill was in Committee. Unless some adequate alteration is adopted, crofters who do not exactly reside on their holdings, but on land contiguous to it, will be excluded from the benefits of the Bill. I mentioned an instance in which there are about 80 people who have feus and houses, and from two to three acres of land. All these people will be excluded from the Bill, unless the right hon. and learned Gentleman will accept the Amendment. My Amendment would have been wider in scope than that of the hon. Member, yet I should be willing to forego what I was going to suggest this evening, and vote for the hon. Gentleman's Amendment, if the right hon. and learned Gentleman will accept it. I think myself the right hon. and learned Gentleman is inclined to accept it, and I hope he will.

DR. R. MACDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I am of the same opinion as my hon. Friend on my right. I am astonished to find, in the original draft of the Bill, that the principle of this Amendment was not included. I think we may dismiss, as of no weight, the argument concerning the crofter having £10,000 a-year, and I do not see why we should wait for the Amendment of the right hon. and learned Gentleman later on. I hope the Government will accept the Amendment. If it does not, I hope my hon. Friend will go to a division on the matter.

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman will adhere to the clear and definite course he pointed out in Committee. As I understand the matter, hon. Gentlemen are quite wrong if they suppose that this clause would exclude the house in which a crofter resides on ground discontiguous to his agricultural or pastoral land. The site of the house in which a crofter may reside in a neighbouring village a short distance from the land he uses for grazing will be included. It would be one holding in the sense of land held under one and the same bargain with the landlord. I do not understand that hon. Members desire more than the recognition of that principle. It must be remembered that if this Amendment were carried, the result would be that still another piece of land would be brought under consideration—land which would not form part of the same holding. I understand the hon. Member only desires to carry out one definite purpose; therefore I hope he will be satisfied with what the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate proposes to carry out his wish.

MR. FINLAY (Inverness, &c.): I hope this Amendment will be accepted. I do not think the words the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate has put upon the Paper would meet the case, they would only refer to a dwelling-house held under the same contract as the croft. There are many cases, however, in which crofters hold their houses under different contracts, and they should not be excluded from the benefits of the Bill. I trust the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy will press the Amendment.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): An hon. Member opposite supported this Amendment by the argument that there are feuars who have holdings near a village. I would remind him that feuars are not the people we are legislating for. We are legislating for tenants from year to year, and feuars have a perpetual tenure.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON: Permit me to give an explanation——

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is not entitled to speak again.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 70; Noes 69: Majority 1.—(Div. List, No. 88.)

On the Motion of The LORD ADVOCATE, the following Amendments made:—In Clause 33, page 13, line 42, leave out "habitually;" in page 14, line 17, after "Act," insert—

"Including the site of his dwelling-house and any offices or other conveniences connected therewith;"

and in Schedule, page 15, after line 11, insert as a separate line—

"(9.) All other improvements which, in the judgment of the Land Commission, shall add to the value of the holding to an incoming tenant."

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be read a third time on Monday the 10th of May."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I should like to know from the right hon. and learned Gentleman whether upon Monday next the Government will be able to give the House any information with regard to the composition of the Land Commission? I asked the question on the second reading, and I was promised an answer at a later stage.

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I am not in a position to say whether I can on Monday give the information desired. The Committee has not yet been formed.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill to be read the third time.

INTERNATIONAL AND COLONIAL COPYRIGHT BILL.—[BILL 156.]

(*Mr. Acland, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Bryce, Mr. Osborne Morgan, Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth.*)

COMMITTEE.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 (Short titles and construction) *agreed to.*

Clause 2 (Amendment as to extent and effect of order under International Copyright Acts).

MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): Mr. Courtney, I beg to move the omission of all the words of the clause after the words "any other order," in line 15. The clause proposes to deal with the right to publish a work written by the citizen of a third country. The object of the Bill is to give mutual protection to the authors of countries which have signed a Convention; but this clause proposes to give protective rights in this country to the publishers of the works of citizens of countries other than the countries having Conventions with one another and with this country. It seems to me that if it is desirable that the clause should stand at all, it should stand in this way—

> "The order may exclude or limit the rights conferred by the International Copyright Acts in the case of authors who are not subjects or citizens of the foreign countries named or dedescribed in that or any other order."

If the clause ends there, sufficient power will be given; but if it goes further, it will raise fresh questions, which I shall be prepared to discuss when the second Amendment of which I have given Notice is considered. I appeal to the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Bryce) who has charge of the Bill to accept the Amendment I suggest. I am confident it will be quite sufficient for his purpose.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 15, to leave out from the words "any other order" to the end of the Clause."—(*Mr. T. H. Bolton.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, (S.): The suggestion of the hon. Gentleman is one which I am afraid the Government cannot accept, because it would, at the very outset, throw us out of harmony with the provisions of the 3rd Article of the International Copyright Convention, to enable us to sign which this Bill is brought in. It is necessary that our own domestic law should be in accordance with the agreement arrived at, and to accept this Amendment would be to act contrary to the agreement. Therefore, whatever arguments may be advanced in its favour, it is impossible for the Government to accept the Amendment. Of course, I am discharged from the duty of arguing the matter fully on its merits, though, if I were to do so, I could give the Committee good reasons for believing that the clause, as it stands, is a very proper one to pass.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): Mr. Courtney, I have now to move that the words "the order contains such limitation and," be omitted, and in line 19, after the words "publisher of such work," the insertion of the words "provided he is entitled through the author," so that the clause will read—

> "The order may exclude or limit the rights conferred by the International Copyright Acts in the case of authors who are not subjects or citizens of the foreign countries named or described, in that or any other order, and if the author of a literary or artistic work first produced in one of those foreign countries is not a British subject, nor a subject or citizen of any of the foreign countries so named or described, the publisher of such work, provided he is entitled through the author, shall for the purpose of any legal proceedings in the United Kingdom for protecting the copyright in such work be deemed to be entitled to such copyright as if he were the author, but this enactment shall not prejudice the rights of such author and publisher as between themselves."

The object of this clause is to give certain rights in this country to a publisher resident in a foreign country of the work of an author who is not a citizen of that foreign country or of this country. The publisher may have no more right to publish the work in the foreign country than he has in this country; and unless you put in the limitation which I suggest, the effect of this clause is to give a publisher who chooses to publish a work of a citizen of a third country a right as against the citizens of this country. In other words, a work may be common property to the whole world; but a publisher in a foreign country, which is under a Convention with this country, may acquire the right to preclude the citizens of this country, who have equal rights with the publisher in that country, from publishing it. I can quite understand that if a publisher in America makes an arrangement with a German author to acquire his rights in

America, whatever those rights are, that may give him a moral right to protect the translation and publication everywhere; but if he has no rights from the author, he has no moral right to interfere with the publication in this country. I suggest that the publisher in a foreign country should have no other right than the right he acquires by contract with the author. I quite sympathize with the right of the author to have full control over his work, and to obtain from the public the full benefit of his brains; but I cannot understand why a man, merely because he is first with a publication, should acquire rights which he has not obtained through the author, and to which he has no moral claim whatever. The word "produced" occurs in the clause. I suggest the substitution of the word "published," because in this Bill "produced" has a different meaning to "published." The Bill applies to dramatic works as well as to ordinary literary productions. I happen, in my own experience, to be acquainted with a case in which an American theatrical manager took a play which was property common to the whole world, and produced it in America. In England the work, being common property, was also produced. Under this Bill the theatrical manager in America, being first to produce the work, would acquire copyright as against the citizens of this country. [*Dissent.*] Hon. Gentlemen shake their heads. The case is that of *The Beggar Student.* The work was first produced in Vienna. It was afterwards produced in New York, and subsequently in this country. It was common property. We had a perfect right to produce it, just as the American manager had a right to produce it; but if this Bill passes into law in its present form, and we have a Convention with the United States, the American manager, having first produced it, will acquire a copyright which will enable him to prevent the performance of the piece in this country. ["Hear, hear!"] An hon. Member cries "Hear, hear!" but is it reasonable that by the mere fact of having first produced it in America, without any arrangement with the author in Vienna, the American manager should acquire the right to exclude an English manager from producing that opera, which is common property? If the American manager made an arrangement with the author, he should have the right to preclude anyone else producing it; but without such an arrangement I cannot understand why he should have the sole right of production.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, lines 15 and 16, to leave out the words "if the order contains such limitation and."—(*Mr. T. H. Bolton.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): The hon. Gentleman seems to me to have altogether mistaken the effect of the clause. The clause does not give any such effect as that my hon. Friend has described. It merely says that where an author, who is not a subject or citizen of the foreign country named or described in the order, the publisher shall represent the author. If the hon. Member will look at the end of the clause he will find the words—

> "But this enactment shall not prejudice the rights of such author and publisher as between themselves."

There is nothing in the clause to absolve the publisher from the duty of making out a good title. Agreeing with the hon. Gentleman as to the necessity of protecting the author, and differing only as to the construction of this clause, I cannot accept his Amendment, because I can see no occasion for it.

MR. T. H. BOLTON: What is the language of the clause?—

> "The publisher of such work shall, for the purpose of any legal proceedings in the United Kingdom for protecting the copyright in such work, be deemed to be entitled to such copyright as if he were the author."

I presume that in an action to enforce rights under the Convention it would not be competent to plead that the claimant was not the assignee of the author, because the Act of Parliament would be put in and prevent it—

> "The publisher of such work shall for the purpose of any legal proceeding . . . . be deemed to be entitled to such copyright as if he were the author."

How would it be possible, then, for the defendant to raise the question that the publisher was not entitled to sue? I really must press my view very strongly upon the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Bryce). I have a little legal experience and some considerable experience of Copyright Law, inasmuch as for many years I was solicitor for the Dramatic Authors' Society, and copyright cases have often come before me. I say unhesitatingly, as a lawyer, that it would not be competent, in an action by a publisher, for the defendant to plead that the plaintiff had no title. Of course, I am in the hands of the hon. Gentleman; but I press my objection very strongly upon him.

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. D. ACLAND) (Cornwall, Launceston): The meaning of this clause is very simple. The author may be either included or excluded. If the author is excluded, in that case, and in that case only, the publisher would come in and take the place of the author.

MR. T. H. BOLTON: Do I understand the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Acland) to say that if the Act of Parliament excludes the man who has the prior moral right, the publisher should have the right—the publisher, who ought only to have the right through the author?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): The hon. Member wants to insert words which we say are already practically in the clause. According to the clause as it stands the publisher must prove his title, and that is what the hon. Member wishes to insure.

MR. WESTLAKE (Essex, Romford): I think it would be well if the hon. Member the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) would reconsider the wording of this clause, because I am under the impression that the hon. Member for St. Pancras (Mr. Bolton) is right in his interpretation of the clause as it now stands. I would suggest to the hon. Member in charge of the Bill the propriety of making the attainment of his object in it more sure.

MR. BRYCE: The matter has been very carefully considered and discussed; but I will have it reconsidered before Report, and if there is really any ambiguity the clause shall be amended.

MR. T. H. BOLTON: After that assurance, Mr. Courtney, I will not press the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 3 (Simultaneous publication).

MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): This clause provides that when a work is produced simultaneously in the United Kingdom and any foreign country, the Order in Council shall determine, for the purpose of copyright, in which country the first production takes place, and then there is a provision that the copyright shall be such only as exists by virtue of the Convention. Well, the effect of that may be to cut down the right of an English author, in some cases, to nearly half the copyright he would otherwise be entitled to under the English law. So far from cutting down the right of the English author under the English law, his right should be carefully preserved; the right he acquires under the Convention should be additional right, and not substituted or reduced right. The Amendment I have now to propose is, therefore, that where a work is produced simultaneously in the United Kingdom and in some foreign country or countries, and is by virtue of an Order in Council protected, the copyright acquired in pursuance of the Order shall not abridge or prejudice the right which the author has under the English law. Let us assume that a work is written by an English author and simultaneously produced in England and the United States, and that under the Copyright Convention it should be decided that the place of first production is the United States. The effect of that will be that the English author's right to copyright will be reduced to 28 years certain, with power to the author and his wife and children to renew for 14 years, instead of 42 years certain or the life of the author and seven years afterwards. The limit of copyright in the United States is 28 years certain, with power to renew for 14 years. The same term to copyright exists in Canada. Therefore, the effect of this clause may be disabling, disqualifying, and reducing, instead of enabling and giving additional advantage. I therefore move, that the clause, instead of restricting the rights of the author to the rights acquired under any Convention, should provide that the rights shall not be abridged or reduced.

Amendment proposed,

In page 2, line 41, to leave out all the words after the word "shall," to the end of the Clause, in order to insert the words "not be abridged or reduced by such first production."—(*Mr. T. H. Bolton.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): I am under a certain difficulty in dealing with the Amendments proposed by the hon. Member, because, unfortunately, they are not on the Paper. It is not very clear to me what their effects are, though I think I see the point of this particular Amendment. We cannot agree to it. It becomes necessary under the Convention to determine, in the case of a work being produced simultaneously in two countries, which country shall be deemed the country of first publication. When the country has been decided upon, it follows that the term of copyright in that country is to be the shorter of the two terms. That is the provision of the Convention which we are bound to carry out. I do not think, however, that what the hon. Member suggests is likely to improve matters, because it is always in the power of the author to produce his work first in which country he chooses. As regards the case of simultaneous production in the United States and here, if the author thought fit to publish first in the United States and then here, he might get a shorter copyright; but he would have the far larger advantage of having that copyright in the United States which he now wants.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 4 (Modification of certain provisions of International Copyright Acts) *agreed to.*

Clause 5 (Restriction on translation).

Mr. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): This clause deals with translation, and provides that the author shall have the right in a foreign country of exclusive translation for 10 years. I think that 10 years is far too long a period. The Commission which dealt with copyright recommended three years. Mr. Justice Stephen, in his Digest of the Law of Copyright, which he prepared for that Commission, recommended that the author should have the exclusive right of translation in a foreign country for three years, and that that right of translation should then last for 10 years. Of course, I can quite understand that the period of exclusive sale of the translation may be varied to suit the Berne Convention; but I cannot understand why an author should require 10 years to make up his mind whether he will authorize a translation of his work to appear in a foreign country. It seems to me that the term is inordinately and absurdly long. I suggest by my Amendment that three years shall be the period during which the author shall have the exclusive right to produce a translation, so that the English author in a foreign country shall have three years to make his arrangements for producing a translation in that foreign country, and a foreign author shall have three years to make up his mind whether he will produce a translation of his work in this country. If, after three years, an author is unable or unwilling to produce a translation, the right to translate should be common property. I move that the term be three years instead of 10.

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 22, to leave out the word "ten," in order to insert the word "three."—(*Mr. T. H. Bolton.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'ten' stand part of the Clause."

Mr. THOROLD ROGERS (Southwark, Bermondsey): I am afraid my hon. Friend the Member for St. Pancras (Mr. Bolton) is not quite aware of the facts, or he would not talk so glibly about the matter. The author is entirely in the hands of the publisher. I, perhaps, am a little prejudiced against publishers; but I may say that I remember that a worthy divine printed a volume of sermons. After two editions of the sermons had gone to press the author was presented with a bill instead of proceeds, and when he went into church instead of reading the lessons he abused the publisher. I am bound to say there is a deal of moral in that story. If you accept this Amendment you will put authors more within the power of the publishers. I hope you will keep to the 10 years.

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. D. ACLAND)(Cornwall, Launceston): The Government cannot possibly accept the Amendment, and for this reason. Article 5 of the Convention expressly lays down the period of 10 years, and we are, therefore, bound to adhere to it.

MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): In my opinion that period is altogether an unreasonable one, and is certainly opposed to the evidence which was given before the Commission on Copyright. I dare say my hon. Friend the Member for Southwark (Mr. Thorold Rogers) has possibly experienced the wickedness of these publishers, and is, consequently, prejudiced against them. I have no such experience; and, with all due respect to my hon. Friend and his facetious remarks, I cannot see what his observations have to do with the question under discussion.

Amendment *negatived.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 6 (Application of Act to existing works).

MR. SPICER (Islington, S.): If the Amendment to this clause which appears on the Paper in the name of the Secretary to the Board of Trade (Mr. Acland) had been put down first I do not think I should have given Notice of my Amendment. I do not think there is much between the two Amendments in regard to the object at which they aim; and, on the whole, I think that of the Secretary to the Board of Trade is the better of the two. Therefore, I shall not move mine.

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. D. ACLAND) (Cornwall, Launceston): I beg to move in page 3, line 42, to leave out from the words "except as regards," inclusive, to end of Clause, and insert—

> "Provided, That where any person has, before the date of the publication of an Order in Council lawfully produced any work in the United Kingdom, nothing in this section shall diminish or prejudice any rights or interests arising from or in connection with such production which are subsisting and valuable at the said date."

In moving this Amendment I merely desire to say that it has been put upon

the Paper at the request of a number of publishers in regard more especially to music, but also including publishers of other works, and after very careful consideration of their requirements.

Amendment proposed,

In page 3, line 42, to leave out from the words "except as regards," inclusive, to end of Clause, and insert—"Provided, That where any person has, before the date of the publication of an Order in Council lawfully produced any work in the United Kingdom, nothing in this section shall diminish or prejudice any rights or interests arising from or in connection with such production which are subsisting and valuable at the said date."—(*Mr. C. T. D. Acland.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I cannot compliment the hon. Gentleman upon this Amendment. The clause as it originally stood was clear and definite, and expressed what it meant; but it appears to me that the amended clause will leave room for litigation—

> "Where any person has, before the date of the publication of an Order in Council lawfully produced."

Why "lawfully?" It must mean something. "Lawfully produced." If the words were "represented or published" that would mean something; but I cannot understand what this means—

> "Where any person has. . . . lawfully produced any work in the United Kingdom, nothing in this section shall diminish or prejudice any rights or interests arising from or in connection with such production which are subsisting and valuable at the said date."

The rights must be "subsisting," and they must be "valuable;" but it occurs to me that the question whether they are valuable or not will be a very difficult one for the Courts of Law to decide; and I think that if the hon. Gentleman takes a case into a Court of Law on the Proviso he has just moved he will find that very considerable difficulty will arise.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN) (Denbighshire, E): I think the Amendment is clear enough. This is mere criticism. The word "lawfully" is intended, I presume, to exclude illegal or piratical production, and if rights are not valuable they are not likely to be contested.

Amendment *agreed to.*

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): In pursuance of the promise which I gave on the second reading I now move that you report Progress, Sir. The remaining clauses refer to Colonial copyright, and we do not propose to deal with them until we have ascertained the views of the Colonies themselves.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Bryce.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Monday* 24th May.

SUPPLY.—REPORT.

Postponed Resolution [3rd May] *considered.*

(25.) "That a sum, not exceeding £58,921, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Courts of Law and Justice in Scotland, and other Legal Charges."

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): At this hour I think it is not unreasonable to ask for a further postponement of this Order until Monday; and I beg, therefore, to make that Motion.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I beg to second that Motion. It must be remembered that the Scotch Votes were taken on Monday——[*Cries of* "Agreed!"]

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be adjourned till Monday next."—(*Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *Monday* next.

HIGHWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

(*Mr. Duckham, Mr. More, Mr. Thomas Blake.*)

[BILL 149.] CONSIDERATION.

Bill, as amended, *considered.*

A Clause (Definition of term "highway,") *added.*

Amendments made.

Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

MOTION.

—o—

ARMS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. John Morley, Bill to continue for a further limited period "The Peace Preservation (Ireland) Act, 1881," *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. John Morley, Mr. Secretary Childers, and Mr. Attorney General.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 205.]

House adjourned at a quarter after Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 7th May, 1886.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Incumbents of Benefices Loans Extension* (89); Municipal Corporations (Scheme Confirmation)* (90); Highways Acts Amendment* (91).

Second Reading—Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order* (71).

ROYAL NAVAL VOLUNTEER CORPS.

RESOLUTION.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH, in rising to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether he is prepared to supply gunboats for the use of the different brigades of the Royal Naval Volunteer Corps, and to move for any further correspondence respecting the above corps from naval officers or other officials who have been instructed to inquire into, or to report upon, the subject? said, that the Naval Volunteer movement had been spreading largely of late, and that it had already gained great popularity. A brigade had recently been formed on the Clyde, and it was intended to raise similar corps at Yarmouth and on the Tyne. He hoped the Admiralty would do their utmost to render this Service as popular and as efficient as the Rifle Volunteers had long been. At present, a member of the corps was not adjudged efficient unless he could prove his competency at gun, rifle, pistol, and cutlass drills. Now, it was almost impossible for a sailor to become efficient at gun drill on shore. To handle a gun well on board ship a man must first acquire his sea legs, and he could only do that at sea. He hoped, therefore, that a gunboat would be placed at the disposal of each corps for a period of four or five months annually. There existed 10 or 12 which were more or less obsolete, but which would serve admirably the purpose which he had in mind. A frequent complaint made by Naval Volunteers was that an efficient man was removed from the list of efficients if he could not be present at the official inspection. That was a very hard rule, and he held that men certified as unavoidably absent by their Commanding Officer should be allowed to remain among the efficients. Volunteers who had obtained commissions after passing the severe examination now prescribed by the Admiralty Regulations were entitled to aspire to higher ranks than were at present accessible to them. The last suggestion he had to make was that officers should be permitted to wear gold instead of silver lace. The latter tarnished very quickly at sea, but gold was not affected by salt water.

Moved, "That there be laid before this House any further correspondence respecting the Royal Naval Volunteer Corps from naval officers or other officials who have been instructed to inquire into or to report upon the subject."—(*The Viscount Sidmouth.*)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (The MARQUESS of RIPON) could assure the noble Viscount that he naturally took a great interest in the Royal Naval Volunteer Force, and that he was anxious to do everything in his power to give it reasonable and legitimate encouragement. The noble Viscount might have a little confidence in him upon this point, because he was connected with the Military Volunteer Force when it was first started. He regretted that he could not produce the Papers which the noble Viscount wished to have. The Report of Sir Robert Molyneux had been received at the Admiralty, where it was still the subject of discussion. That being the case, it would not be in accordance with the usual practice or convenient to lay it on the Table of the House. Besides, it was more or less confidential. Another Report connected with this subject which the noble Viscount desired to have was a Report which was made to the War Office, and he could not undertake to produce it without the concurrence of the Secretary of State for War. With reference to the noble VISCOUNT's suggestions, he might say that of late years it had been the practice of the Admiralty to place a gunboat at the disposal of the Corps of Volunteers, and it was the intention of the present Board to continue the practice. The *Avon* had been set apart for the London District, and the *Tay* had been commissioned as a tender to the *Hotspur*, with the object of making her available for corps at Bristol and Liverpool. As to the corps on the Clyde, it had been formed only a short time, and was not yet in a condition to embark on a gunboat for sea practice. Hereafter, the same course would be pursued in the case of that corps as in the case of the others. He was obliged to the noble Viscount for his suggestions, and would carefully consider them. Most of them related to points which were referred to in the Reports of Admiral Hamilton and Sir Robert Molyneux, and which would be taken into consideration by the Admiralty.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH asked the noble Marquess to take into consideration the position and pay of the instructors of these corps, with a view to their improvement.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

NAVY—EXPLOSION ON BOARD H.M.S. "COLLINGWOOD."

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH, in rising to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether an official Report has been received of the circumstances that attended the bursting of a gun on board H.M.S. *Collingwood;* and, if no Report has reached the Admiralty, by what process the First Lord intends that an inquiry shall be conducted? pointed out that the bursting of a gun of that kind was a matter of very great importance, because there were only eight or ten such guns on board a vessel; and it was a very different matter as compared with the time when there were a much larger number of guns of a lesser calibre. It was not the first time that accidents of this serious character had occurred. The opinions as to the cause were exceedingly diverse, and it was very necessary that a full investigation and inquiry should take place.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (The Marquess of RIPON): I am not at all surprised that a Question has been put to me on this subject, and I quite agree with the noble Viscount in thinking that the accident was a very serious one indeed, and deserves, as it will most assuredly receive so far as I am concerned, the most careful consideration of the Government. There ought certainly to be a full and ample investigation into all the circumstances which attended it. This occurrence took place last Tuesday, the gun bursting with a charge of 221¼ lb. of powder, being about three-fourths of the proper charge. As the House is aware, the gun burst about 8 feet from the muzzle. That, no doubt, was a very serious matter indeed, for the Admiralty had, at the time of this accident, 11 of these particular 43-ton guns, and this accident, of course, throws great doubt on the security of the other 10 guns on board the *Collingwood* and two other ships, the *Colossus* and the *Conqueror*. A full Report on the accident was received at the Admiralty yesterday from Captain Fisher, who was in command of the *Excellent;* but I did not wait until this Report had been received to take action in the matter. I immediately placed myself in communication with the Ordnance Department of the War Office as to what steps should be taken with regard to the remaining 10 43-ton guns. I conferred with Colonel Maitland, Superintendent of the Royal Gun Factories, Captain Noble, the manager of the Elswick Company, who happened to be in town, and with the Director of Naval Ordnance; and the result of our discussion was that these three officers were of opinion that it was desirable —they did not go so far as to say it was necessary—they said it was desirable to strengthen these 10 remaining guns by hooping them near the muzzle. I communicated the result of this conversation to my Colleagues on the Board of Admiralty, and yesterday we wrote to the War Office to request that they would proceed as rapidly as they could to strengthen these 10 guns. I fear that this will be a matter requiring some time; but Colonel Maitland is of opinion that the work can be done in a month, and that it will not be necessary to interfere with the gun carriages. Even if it is an under-estimate, and it takes two or three months to carry it out, it will still be very much less time than many have been led to suppose. All that will be necessary will be to send the guns to Woolwich Factory—not all at the same time, but two or three at a time. We must all be agreed that this question requires a searching inquiry; and I understand it is the intention of the War Department to call on the Ordnance Select Committee, with certain associate members, men of great distinction, to report upon this accident. I have not been able to enter into communication with my right hon. Friend (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) on this question, as he has been absent from London; but he will return to-day or to-morrow, and I shall place myself in communication with him. I will suggest to him that inquiry shall not end with the Report of the Ordnance Committee, but that a further and subsequent inquiry shall take place into the whole of the circumstances connected with this unfortunate accident. I quite agree with the noble Viscount that this is a very serious matter indeed, and I can assure him that it will not be my fault if it is not thoroughly examined into, and if steps are not taken to prevent, so far as possible, the recurrence of such accidents. It must, however, be remembered that steel is a very uncertain material, and accidents of this sort must, unhappily, be expected from time to time.

THE EARL OF RAVENSWORTH observed, that the supply of ordnance was one of the most important questions of the day. Ships were delayed in their construction not only for months, but for years, because the question of the guns which the ship was to carry had not been settled. Unless the constructor of a ship knew what the size and power of the guns were to be which she was to carry it was perfectly impossible for him to design a ship properly. With regard to the question of the 43-ton guns, he wished to know whether he was correct in the idea that the very important Ordnance Committee, which had sat for at least a year, and which had reported last July or August, had recommended the 43-ton gun, but had joined that recommendation with another distinct recommendation that the full charge should not be used? If that was the case, that recommendation was surely very negative praise of that ordnance, and looked very much as if there was a suspicion concerning it in the minds of those experts who had examined into the question. Now that slow burning powder was used the pressure upon the gun was very great where the hooping ceased, and this caused the danger. He had only a short time before been speaking to one who was a thorough judge both of ships and guns—Lord Charles Beresford—who had said that it was better to lose three ships than burst one gun, because if men distrusted the weapon with which they had to work it inevitably had a demoralizing effect upon them. That showed the immense importance of the question; and it was one also which affected the whole question of our home defences. Considerable progress had been made lately by the engineers upon some of our defences; but until they knew what the gun was to be they were altogether in the dark. He earnestly hoped that the work of strengthening the guns would be rapidly proceeded with, and also that this question, as affecting the manufacture of heavy ordnance, would be thoroughly sifted to the very bottom. He also trusted that the Government would carefully consider the possibility of making the Admiralty itself responsible for the supply of guns to the Navy.

THE MARQUESS OF RIPON said, that with respect to the large and important question alluded to by the noble Earl in the latter part of his remarks he fully recognized its importance, and both before and since the accident it had been occupying his attention, and would continue to do so. With respect to what had fallen from the noble Earl with regard to the recommendation of the Committee which had reported last year, the noble Earl was very nearly right, but not quite. This question did not touch all the 43-ton guns or those now being manufactured, which were made stronger towards the muzzle; and there were also several other 43-ton guns which were of stronger make. The question affected only 11 guns; and with respect to these 11 guns the Committee had reported that no alteration was required, but recommended that the full charge of 295lb. of cocoa powder should not be exceeded. He quite admitted that this direction that the full charge should not be exceeded might seem to express some doubt as to the gun, unless they bore in mind that in spite of this the Committee had reported that the gun should not be altered.

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND.

OBSERVATION. QUESTION.

LORD ASHBOURNE remarked, that the Government had placed on the Table of the other House an interesting Return of the addresses of various Bodies in Ireland in reply to the invitation of the Prime Minister for the expression of opinion regarding the government of Ireland. He thought that it would be convenient if this Return were also circulated in their Lordships' House; and he would ask the Lord President whether he would lay it on the Table?

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Earl SPENCER) said, that he would be perfectly willing to do so.

INCUMBENTS OF BENEFICES LOANS EXTENSION BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to extend the time for the repayment of loans granted by the Governors of the Bounty of Queen Anne for the Augmentation of the Maintenance of the Poor Clergy to incumbents of Benefices—Was *presented* by The Duke of Buckingham and Chandos; read 1^a. (No. 89.)

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS (SCHEME CONFIRMATION) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to confirm a scheme made by a Committee of the Lords of Her Majesty's Privy Council under the Municipal Corporations Act, 1882, relating to Higham Ferrers—Was *presented* by The Lord President; read 1^a; and *referred* to the Examiners. (No. 90.)

House adjourned at a quarter past Five o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 7th May, 1886.

MINUTES.] — PRIVATE BILLS (*by Order*) — *Withdrawn*—Charterhouse.

Second Reading—Shanklin and Chale Railway (Extension to Freshwater).*

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS — *Ordered* — *First Reading* – Gas and Water (No. 3)* [206]; Water* [207].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

CHARTERHOUSE BILL.—[*Lords.*]

(*by Order.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER (Isle of Wight): I need scarcely say that under ordinary circumstances I should not have thought it necessary to address the House in moving the second reading of this Bill. But a good deal of misunderstanding seems to prevail in regard to the measure which misunderstanding is not confined to hon. Members only, but extends to statements which have appeared in the public Press, and which are absolutely without foundation and of a misleading character. I think it right that hon. Members should understand the exact position of the Bill, what it is that it contemplates, and why it has been introduced. I may remind the House that the Bill has already passed the House of Lords, and that, in addition, it has been approved by the Charity Commissioners, and has received the sanction of the Attorney General, without which it could not be proceeded with. It is a Bill to enable the Governors of the Charterhouse to carry out efficiently, and in the way which was originally contemplated, the wishes and intentions of the Founder. I would like to show who the Governors of the Charterhouse are. If hon. Members will refer to a statement which has been printed in support of the second reading of the Bill they will find that the Governors of the Charterhouse, acting under the Charter and Acts relating to the Foundation, are:—The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop of York, the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, the Earl of Selborne, Viscount Cranbrook, the Bishop of London, the Bishop of Rochester, Lord Coleridge, Lord Clinton, Lord Rollo, the Right Hon. William Ewart Gladstone, M.P., John Gilbert Talbot, Esq., M.P., and Canon Elwyn, Master. The Charterhouse existed in its present condition since 1611, and this is a Bill to enable the Governors of the Charterhouse to dispose of part of their London property without, to any appreciable extent, injuring, or in any way impairing, the ancient building. As a Carthusian myself, I will tell the House that I would not have taken any part in support of the Bill if there had been any intention to injure the old building, which is really one of the ornaments of London. The necessity for the measure arises in this way. Owing to the scheme whereby the funds of the hospital were divided into two parts in the year 1872, or thereabouts, the available income of the Charterhouse Hospital at the present time has been reduced to about £10,000 a-year. The income has been falling off for several years in consequence of the depression in the property of the Charity in Cambridgeshire, and other counties; and I am sorry to say there is no doubt whatever that so far from there being any prospect of improvement, matters are looking much worse, leases are falling in, and there is the greatest difficulty in inducing persons to take up the land even at greatly reduced rents. Owing to this fact the Governors of the Charterhouse find themselves unable to carry on the hospital upon its present basis without incurring an annual pecuniary loss. The lowest estimate which can be formed of the necessary expenditure in order to maintain even the reduced number of pensioners is about £12,800 a-year. The original number of pensioners was 80; but it has been obliged already to be reduced to 55, and the Governors have now to consider how best to carry on the affairs of the hospital. Having considered the matter most anxiously after the expenditure of a considerable amount of time, and having taken the most competent advice, they have come to the conclusion that if the Charity is to afford anything like the benefit which it was intended by its founder that it should afford, some change must be made. At the end, or, rather, at the beginning of last year, and all through the year, it became necessary for the Governors of the Charterhouse to consider what course should be adopted; and after very grave consideration, after consulting the most competent persons, after taking the advice of the Charity Commissioners, and submitting their scheme to the Attorney General, this Bill has been brought in. The Bill, as the House will probably know, is a Bill to enable a certain portion of the Charterhouse property to be sold or let for purposes of building. Probably the House will be aware that a considerable portion of the original property, which at one time formed the playground of the school, was sold 15 or 18 years ago to the Merchant Taylors' Company, and has been utilized for the Merchant Taylors' School. The remaining portion of the property consists of about six acres. Of that two acres forming Charterhouse Square will not be touched or interfered with at all. Of the remaining four acres I believe that about half an acre is to be devoted to public gardens, and about three-quarters of an acre to a new street, making altogether one and a-quarter acres, and leaving about three acres to be dealt with, which are covered at present either by old buildings or by new. I desire to deal at once with the opposition to the Bill. That opposition, to a great extent, proceeds from motives with which I entirely sympathize—namely, the desire to maintain and preserve the ancient buildings of the Charterhouse. I should like the House to understand what these ancient buildings consist of, and I hope that some hon. Members may have visited the place and have had an opportunity of seeing the buildings as they now stand. The ancient buildings consist of a master's lodge, a very fine hall and chapel, and a court which forms what is called Washhouse Court. It is proposed to leave nearly the whole of these old buildings untouched. The Bill proposes that a street should be taken through the ground floor of Washhouse Court at both ends. I have plans here which will enable hon. Members better to understand the nature of the scheme. The whole of Washhouse Court will be left intact, except the ground floor on the north and south, leaving the east and west sides and the rest of Washhouse Court intact. The upper part of the building will not be interfered with at all. I should have been most thankful, if it had been possible, for the scheme to be promoted without touching any part of Washhouse Court; but of the four walls of that Court which now exist, three of them have been to a considerable extent altered and modernized, and, in fact, there is not one of the four walls which is in the exact condition in which it stood originally. If hon. Members who have taken a prominent part in securing the preservation of old buildings will take the pains to understand this design, they will see that the promoters of the Bill, in their main motives, have been actuated by a desire to preserve the Charterhouse as much as possible. The objections which have been taken to the Bill I will not at all attempt to deal with now; but I desire to say that, as far as the preservation of the old buildings is concerned, if the House thinks that it is not sufficiently provided for, the promoters will be only too glad to consent to any clause to insure that no alteration should be made in what are really the old buildings of the Charterhouse—namely, the master's lodge, the hall and chapel, and the remainder of Washhouse Court. I hope, however, that the House will be satisfied with the manner in which the Governing Body have dealt with the case, and it must be borne in mind that with regard to the rest of the property a considerable proportion is proposed to be given up for open spaces. If anyone will go to the Charterhouse and see the buildings as they exist there, I think he would be satisfied that no public injury is contemplated by the scheme, and he would also be able to recognize the fact that at the present moment the public have no access to these buildings at all. He would, therefore, probably come to the conclusion, if he viewed the matter fairly, that that which is proposed to be done by the Governors under the necessities of the case is only to secure the utilization of that part of the property for the purpose of carrying out the intentions of the Founder of the Charity without interfering with the preservation of the ancient buildings. I am not aware that there is anything in the Bill to which I need call the attention of the House, at any rate in the present stage. Of course, I shall have the opportunity of hearing what my hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead (Mr. W. H. James), who is opposing the Bill, wishes to say against it, and I shall have the right of replying. I hope the House will clearly understand that it is only stern necessity which induces the Governors of the Charterhouse to bring forward this measure. They will, if the Bill passes, be able to maintain 200 pensioners, instead of 55, as at present. The present condition of things is such that the large cost of maintaining the property swallows up all the income; and the Governors find themselves unable to keep up the Charity and distribute its benefits in the way in which the Founder originally intended. I trust that when the House fully understand the nature of the Bill, and have had placed before them the objections which have been made to it, they will be of opinion that the Bill is one which ought to be read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir Richard Webster.*)

Mr. W. H. JAMES (Gateshead), in rising to move as an Amendment—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, it is inexpedient to abolish the Hospital founded by Thomas Sutton in the London Charterhouse, to mutilate a most interesting relic of Old London, and to cover with buildings a considerable area of open ground in the heart of the Metropolis, in order to reconstruct a Charity which, in its present form, carries out the intention of the Founder, and has not been shown to be unsuitable to the needs of the present day, or to have given rise to abuses,"

said: I am afraid that the hon. and learned Gentleman, in the speech he has just made, seems to suppose that the opposition to this Bill is somewhat unreasonable. But I beg to assure him that those with whom I am acting consider that this is a most unreasonable Bill. I do not think it would be well that I should, at any great length, detain the House with the antiquarian history of the Charterhouse. All I need say is that the Charity was founded by Mr. Thomas Sutton at the commencement of the 17th century, and that it affords a striking example of the princely munificence which was exercised at that period. In 1611 Mr. Thomas Sutton bought the Charterhouse from the Howard family for £13,000. At the end of the same year Mr. Thomas Sutton died; but in the meantime he had founded the hospital, and left by his will ample funds for its maintenance. For the additional buildings that were necessary he left a sum of £5,000. He added another sum of £1,000 to the treasury of the Hospital, and a further sum of £20,000 for the general purposes and objects of the Charity. A rather remarkable circumstance then occurred. No sooner was Mr. Thomas Sutton dead than strenuous efforts were made in different quarters, on the part of various persons, to become possessed of these Charities. A nephew of the name of Baxter entered into litigation after having vainly attempted to obtain forcible possession of the Charterhouse, and he attracted to his cause no less a person than Sir Francis Bacon. Sir Francis Bacon wrote to the King a letter, in which he criticized the whole of Mr. Thomas Sutton's plan, and suggested other ways in which the funds left by the will of the Founder might have been better expended. He described Howard House, which it was intended to utilize for the purposes of a hospital as fit for a Prince's establishment, and as suitable for Sutton's Charity as "giving an embroidered cloak to a poor beggar." In order to succeed in their suit, the Trustees of the Hospital thought it right to devote part of the sum of £20,000, which had been left by Mr. Thomas Sutton, to the building of a bridge over the Tweed at Berwick. No sooner was this sum paid into Court by the representatives of Mr. Thomas Sutton than judgment was given, successfully establishing their right to the Charity. Subsequent Acts of Parliament confirmed the Governors of the Charterhouse in their privileges. It is now proposed by the present Bill to destroy and lay open for building purposes part of the old burial ground, and a very striking portion of Washhouse Court. There is no doubt that a considerable portion of the building originally constituted the old Carthusian Monastery—one of the few institutions of the kind now existing in the country. It is of the utmost importance that the remains of that building should be preserved, as originally intended, as the home of the pensioners of this Charity; but the Bill which is now before the House proposes to devote for building purposes some four, five, or six acres which now belong to it. I cannot exactly state what the precise area is, because I find that there is a difference of opinion, even on the part of those who have made the most careful measurements; but that is a matter which, if the Bill should finally go before a Select Committee, could be inquired into there. The measure proposes virtually to destroy and lay open for building purposes part of the old burial ground, the inner quadrangle, and important and striking portions of old Howard House and Washhouse Court. It is not desirable that I should enter into particulars as to the exact merits of these particular buildings. No doubt a very considerable portion of the building was the home of the brethren of the Carthusian Monastery, and it was the most interesting part of the building. At the time of the disruption of the Monasteries by Henry VIII., Prior Houghton, who was at the head of this Monastery, was beheaded, and the Monastery was put down. Now, it seems to me that very few important and available relics of the great Monasteries of the Mediæval period have been preserved; and, as has been just stated, the fewer we have of them the more precious they become. To my mind it is an act of Philistinism, of barbarism, and of Vandalism, which the House is asked to sanction, under the patronage of these great names of the Governors of the Charterhouse, by sweeping away an old monument of this character. I do not wish to enter into a controversy with regard to the objects of Mr. Thomas Sutton—the pious Founder of this Charity. Pious Founders have, over and over again, left money for all sorts of objects of an undesirable character. I do not wish to inquire into the question merely from antiquarian or æsthetic grounds; but I do not think it right to turn and twist the objects of a Charity at the will and desire of any number of persons, no matter how eminent, purely for commercial and mercenary purposes. I am sorry to hear that the Governors of this Charity are suffering, like scores of other individuals, from the depression of agriculture. But, if such be the case, it appears to me that, like other persons, they should exercise a wise and rigid economy, and should reduce the number of their pensioners, or the number of their scholars. I do not wish to attack or enter into any controversy with my hon. and learned Friend as to the arrangement of the funds of the Charterhouse by the Charity Commissioners. I have no doubt that in all the arrangements they have made for dealing with Charities of this character they have been desirous of acting upon the principles of justice and good sense. But the Governors of this Charity, whose distinguished names appear at the head of the statement which has been printed on behalf of the Bill, are gentlemen who are not able, on account of the multifarious duties they have to discharge in other respects, to devote their whole attention to that impartial consideration of the interests of the Charterhouse which that Institution requires. I understood my hon. and learned Friend to say that the plan which has been submitted to the House has the approval of the architect of the Charterhouse himself—an old Carthusian. I presume that he referred to Mr. Herbert Carpenter; and I find that that gentleman has written a letter with respect to the threatened demolition of the Charterhouse, in which he says—

> "We 'old Carthusians' had, till recently, been under the impression that our ancient buildings would be respected in any scheme of the Governors for re-arranging the Charity. It seems, however, that if a Bill as now drawn (and printed in *The Times*) is passed, any or every part of the buildings, ancient as well as modern, can be swept away by the present Governors or by their successors. Some of us think very decidedly that the power sought for, if given at all, should be strictly limited, and I have drawn out a plan in order to show to those interested what we mean by the term 'Old Charterhouse,' we so much wish to be preserved."

After entering into particulars, Mr. Carpenter says—

> "It is obvious that the projected street cannot be driven through the Charterhouse property without destroying more or less of the buildings—especially the ancient portions of them; and I must add, that at a meeting held to-day on this subject we were told, on good authority, that the street is to go from Clerkenwell Road to Charterhouse Square, with, of course, buildings on either side of it. A mere glance at the plan will show that all 'Washhouse Court' will be demolished, with part of Howard House. I think I may say that most of us will not be satisfied with the sparing of the chapel and hall, and but fragments of Howard House; and if success cannot be insured to the scheme without this destruction, the Bill ought, we think, to be rejected in Parliament; or, if carried, it should be in such an altered form as to secure to us all our ancient and historical buildings, still to be, we trust, used in some way in harmony with our Founder's intentions."

This gentleman is now the honorary or consulting architect to the Governors, and I believe it is his plan, to a very considerable extent, which the hon. and learned Gentleman is anxious to carry out. I think it is a pity that an ancient building like this should be handed over to the tender mercies and fantastic views of any architect whatever. No doubt, there are many architects who are anxious to try their hands upon old buildings; but I hope that in this instance the House will agree with me that, as far as is now possible, the general character of what still remains of Mediæval London should be preserved. There are many things attributed to this Democratic Parliament; but I venture to say that it will not be found wanting in a proper spirit of respect and reverence for the old monuments of the country. Personally, I regard any project for the destruction of this old monument and record as an act of Vandalism. My hon. and learned Friend says that the Bill does not propose to destroy these buildings; but suppose that you have a church standing in the centre of a churchyard, if you place buildings all over that churchyard surely you destroy the beauty of the church itself. It would be very much the same in this case. If you build over the whole of the land upon which the Charterhouse now stands you will destroy its architectural beauty. And it is quite likely that in doing so you may altogether upset the arrangements between the Governors of the Charterhouse and the Merchant Taylors' Company in reference to their schools, and that the Merchant Taylors' School may no longer be retained in London, so that that part of this property may also be swept away and devoted to purely mercenary objects. I do not know that there would be any use in my detaining the House as to the arrangements which may be made between funds devoted to the school and those for the maintenance of the pensioners. As I have already said, I oppose the Bill upon general grounds, and I hope that after he has listened to the debate my hon. and learned Friend will withdraw the measure in deference to the consensus of feeling which I feel certain will be expressed by the House. I certainly cannot consent to abstain from going to a division, because I cannot allow so objectionable a measure to pass unchallenged through a second reading. I do not think that it is desirable that it should be discussed before a Committee, because I know what the discussion of details and matters of this kind before a Select Committee means. We are nearly half-way through the Session, and Bills are frequently, under such circumstances, allowed to go before a Committee as a matter of chance in a haphazard way; and I am very much afraid that if this Bill is sent to a Committee, the general importance of the question, and the grounds of objection I have raised, will run the risk of being entirely lost sight of in mere technical matters. Under these circumstances, I beg to move the Amendment of which I have given Notice.

MR. R. CHAMBERLAIN (Islington, W.): I beg to second the Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, it is inexpedient to abolish the Hospital founded by Thomas Sutton in the London Charterhouse, to mutilate a most interesting relic of Old London, and to cover with buildings a considerable area of open ground in the heart of the Metropolis, in order to re-construct a Charity which, in its present form, carries out the intention of the Founder, and has not been shown to be unsuitable to the needs of the present day, or to have given rise to abuses,"—(*Mr Walter James,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse): It was only this morning that I first saw the Charterhouse Bill, and heard of this attempt to authorize the sale, exchange, or lease of certain lands and buildings of the Governors of Sutton's Hospital in Charterhouse, one of the oldest and grandest Institutions of this City; and I very much regret that an hon. and learned Member, who has a seat on this side of the House, should have taken charge of the second reading of such a Bill. I should have thought that if one of the old Institutions of the Realm were to be attacked, we should look for defenders among hon. Gentlemen near me. Therefore, I feel bound personally to stand up and oppose the Motion which the hon. and learned Member has made. For 250 years, at least, the Charterhouse has fulfilled its duties to the City of London, as laid down and willed by the Founder; and if the House were to accept the Motion of the hon. and learned Gentleman, I believe they would, in verity, be putting the axe to the root of a very large and substantial tree. I have no doubt that the Governors of the Charterhouse are animated by a desire to carry out the intentions of the Founder — Thomas Sutton—but I take it that this scheme would, if adopted, end in the removal of the "Brethren," from the City of London, and would destroy the Charity of the Charterhouse, in which some 55 pensioners are enjoying the hospitality of this ancient Foundation. Hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House know the amount of good that will be done in the City, and in the East of London, by continuing the Charterhouse; and I hope that they, together with hon. Members who sit on this side of the House, will support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Gateshead (Mr. W. H. James). I would remind hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway on this side of the House that the Charterhouse is an ancient monastic institution, and therefore I am sure they will sympathize in any effort that may be made to preserve it, and will not be prepared to destroy even the part of one of the most ancient foundations in London. Speaking for myself, I feel that for years past there has been too much interference with these old Foundations, with a view of assessing them simply at their money value. I believe that Institutions of this kind cannot be estimated at a money value, for it is a building which cannot be replaced when once destroyed. We might as well attempt to assess Westminster Abbey at a money value, and let the ground for building purposes. What would be said of a proposal to destroy Westminster Abbey, or to pull down the Houses of Parliament, on the ground that the sites on which they stand would be very suitable for private residences? I ask the House to consider the question with the utmost care. If the hon. Member for Gateshead had not submitted an Amendment, I should certainly have been prepared to move myself, to the effect that a Committee should be appointed to consider the whole question, although it is with very great regret that I find myself compelled to oppose the hon. and learned Gentleman who sits before me.

Mr. J. G. TALBOT (Oxford University): Like other hon. Members, I regret very much that this discussion should have been considered necessary, and I also regret some of the language which has been used in the course of it, and especially in the speech to which we listened from my hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead (Mr. W. H. James). We have been told that we are sweeping away the ancient buildings of the country; that we are guilty of Vandalism, barbarism, and Philistinism; and that in doing away with one of the ornaments of the country we are actuated by commercial and mercenary motives. This is really a question of conservation, and not of destruction. On this occasion, as one of the Governors of the Charterhouse, I feel bound to say that no hon. Member who had spent half the time and anxious thought which I have upon this case would have come to a hostile conclusion upon the proposals contained in this Bill. The course which we have taken is one of absolute necessity, unless we are prepared to sacrifice the real and essential objects of Mr. Thomas Sutton, the Founder, and reduce the number of pensioners. If we cannot develop the London property of the Charterhouse to some extent the main objects of Mr. Thomas Sutton's Charity will be rendered completely nugatory. The Governors have gone into the archæological question with great care; we have consulted, as my hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead (Mr. W. H. James) told the House, an eminent architect, who is an old Carthusian, and is the honorary architect of the Charterhouse, and that gentleman tells us that he will be able to preserve not only all the really ancient parts of the building, but even be able, he hopes, to give it an improved architectural appearance. The two chief parts of the building are Howard House and Washhouse Court. Howard House, which is an absolutely unique specimen of a nobleman's house of the 16th century, will be altogether preserved. Washhouse Court is all that remains of the old monastic building, and it is proposed to run a road through it. That road is now objected to. I am sorry that it is necessary to do this; but, unfortunately, we are obliged to approve of the plan submitted to us, because unless there is a road through it would be impossible to develop the property beyond. The hon. Member opposite has spoken of mercenary motives, and he was cheered by his hon. Friends below the Gangway. I am glad to see the sensitive spirit which is arising in that quarter; but I want to know where the mercenary motives are? Does the hon. Member for Gateshead (Mr. W. H. James) suppose that the Governors are going to put any money into their own pockets by promoting this scheme? [Mr. W. H. James: No.] Then what does the hon. Member mean? Our only object is to carry out the objects of Mr. Thomas Sutton, the Founder, and to obtain a little more money for spending upon a larger number of old men and women, who are the pensioners of this Charity. The objects of the Charity are two in number—namely, the education of the young, and the maintenance of the old. One of the strongest appeals in favour of the Charity is the beautiful and romantic picture of the old Charterhouse Hospital immortalized by Thackeray; and I believe that if the *Newcomes* had never been written there would not have been the present manifestation of feeling in regard to this Bill, and the large attendance which we have at this hour. We are trying to carry out the objects of Mr. Thomas Sutton, and what we say is that we desire to make provision for a larger number of Colonel Newcomes at the Charterhouse, and to give some of them out-pensions. What I would ask hon. Members to do, before they give an adverse vote on this occasion, is to consider the real bearings of the case. The Governors have tried their best to preserve all the architectural and historical features of the Charterhouse, and they have hardly sacrificed anything that can be called an open space. Indeed the hon. Member opposite practically gave up the argument as to open spaces. Nothing worth speaking of has been sacrificed; the burial ground, which will now be thrown open, has been actually closed for many years to the public; it is the sincere desire of the Governors to preserve all the archæological, historical, architectural, and antiquarian features of the Charterhouse; and we have done our best to insure not only that the number of pensioners who have been hitherto maintained upon Mr. Thomas Sutton's Foundation should be kept up, but that a considerable number of out-pensioners should be maintained in addition. I believe that my hon. and learned Friend (Sir Richard Webster) has fairly and impartially explained the perfectly legitimate case we have for promoting this Bill; and I may add that it is only the agricultural and general depression which has prevailed, and which has so largely affected our country estates, that has created the necessity for it. Looking at all the circumstances, I hope the House will place confidence in the motives by which the Governors are actuated, and will consent to read the Bill a second time.

VISCOUNT LYMINGTON (Devon, South Molton): I wish to point out to the House why I do not think that the Governors of the Charterhouse have any claim at all upon this House for confidence. I am speaking, I believe, perfectly within the facts when I say that 15 or 20 years ago five and a-half acres of land were sold by the Governors to the Merchant Taylors' Company without public competition for £90,000, which is worth to-day at least £250,000. If that is the way in which the Charterhouse funds and property have been managed, we ought to have many more detailed reasons to show why the scheme of the Governors is justified, and why it is necessary, than we have yet heard. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has reminded the House that it is the wish of the Governors to carry out the object of Mr. Thomas Sutton. Now, the object of Mr. Thomas Sutton, in his own words, was the education not of boys, but of poor boys. At the present moment the Charterhouse School is a large, and, doubtless, a very creditable school; but the boys who use that school are not poor boys. The son of a Royal Prince, I believe, attends the school at the present moment. To my mind it is a very great perversion of the Charity of Mr. Thomas Sutton that the money, which he left for the use of the poor, is, in fact, used for the children of the rich. What is the estimated sum, speaking roughly, that the school costs? I believe that the income of the Charterhouse is somewhere about £20,000. The school costs £10,000; but there are only 60 scholars upon the Foundation. If this is to be justified on principles of economy, then that economy should be in the direction of retrenchment—spending less upon the School. I think we have a right to ask this, and I say that those of us who sit below the Gangway have a right to oppose Bills of this kind, even when they come before us supported by great names and high authorities, because we believe that an important part of the Charity has been perverted. For these reasons I shall certainly support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Gateshead (Mr. W. H. James).

SIR EDMUND LECHMERE (Worcestershire, Bewdley): I do not propose to detain the House for more than a few minutes. I am afraid there are very few hon. Members who are intimately acquainted with the architectural features of the Charterhouse. It is not necessary to explain the history of that noble Foundation; but there are one or two points upon which I should like to elicit information, quite apart from historical or antiquarian questions. We ought to know whether the Governors have considered the question of providing suitable almshouses for the old people—the successors of Colonel Newcome—who are now inmates of the Hospital, in the event of their selling the very valuable site which the Bill will enable them to dispose of. It would be a sad thing that these old men should have to leave their comfortable quarters without any provision being made for them in the future. I do not think that the Governors are quite carrying out the wishes of the Founder, which was to establish residences for decayed merchants, and I am afraid that it will be a severe blow to the pensioners if they are compelled to leave the comfortable quarters they now occupy. I would suggest that the House, before consenting to the Bill, should give time in order that the Governors may satisfy the public that they have a scheme to provide for the establishment of almshouses at Godalming or elsewhere. As to the son of a Royal Prince being educated upon the Foundation, I believe that that is not altogether contrary to the design of the Founder, and that the School contains both collegians and oppidans.

Viscount LYMINGTON: The hon. Baronet has somewhat misunderstood my argument. All that I said was that the School was intended for the sons of the poor, and not for the sons of the rich.

Mr. STORY-MASKELYNE (Wilts, Cricklade): I trust that I may be allowed to make a few remarks upon this question, which is one in which I have taken some interest, and I think that the few observations I propose to make may serve to allay the feeling which has been raised against the speech of my hon. Friend behind me (Mr. W. H. James) in the use of the word "mercenary." That little word let slip by my hon. Friend has been made the ground of an attack upon him which it is perfectly clear to me to be by no means deserved. I am satisfied that he did not in the least mean to use the word in the sense in which it has been taken up. What he meant was simply that the sale of the land was the object of the Bill, that these old buildings were going to be pulled down, and the property sold, with a view of realizing a larger income for the Charity. I may say, for my own part, and I believe for every hon. Member on this side of the House, that I do not think there is one among us who is prepared to say that the Governors have not done what they conceived to be for the best in the discharge of their duty. But what I wish to impress upon the House is this—that there is a great difference between the duty of the Governors of the Institution and the duty of the House. With regard to the larger question—namely, that of looking not merely at the Charity, but also at all that which sheds a halo round it from antiquity, I do not think that any man who has visited the Charterhouse, or is at all acquainted with it—and certainly no man who loves it, as many in this House do—can question that the destruction in any way of any portion of this old landmark of the City, involving as it does the destruction of one out of two or three of the remaining relics of the stately Palaces of the days of the Tudors, is greatly to be regretted. The work of destroying our ancient architecture has gone on until we have few relics left, with the exception of Westminster Abbey, Westminster Hall, and the Tower, with a few scattered fragments here and there. There are few more interesting, from an antiquarian and historical point of view, than the Charterhouse, which was built out of the funds collected by the piety and devotion of one of the great Religious Orders of olden times, in the most splendid period of English architecture. I do not mean to say that the architecture of the Charterhouse is splendid, but of its kind it is thoroughly genuine, and extremely interesting. The building originated in the devotion of a great Religious Institution. In the time of James I. a great Prince and Nobleman erected a magnificent mansion here, and subsequently Mr. Thomas Sutton, from the wealth which had accrued to him as one of the great London merchants, acquired the property. He devoted it to objects which I hope the Radical elements of the House of Commons of the present day will not repudiate. I trust that hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway will take quite another view of their duty, and will be prepared to maintain a Charity which, when it was founded, was divided between hospitality to poor old men and the children of the poor who were to be instructed and maintained in the Charterhouse School. But, by a perversion which I am happy to say does not belong to our time, but to an age long past and gone—a perversion of the original purpose of the Charity—the funds of this great Institution have been devoted to the bringing up and education of a large number of children of the better class who can well afford their own education; and, on the other hand, the hospital funds have been devoted not to the support of poor old men, but to the maintenance of those who, by accident or other circumstances of life, have fallen from a high to a low estate. These decayed gentlemen now find a home around the old cells where the Carthusian monks passed their time in religious devotions. I believe that the feeling of the House, so far as it has been manifested in the course of the debate, is in favour of the rejection of this Bill; and I will venture to answer, in a few words, some of the points which have been raised by the hon. and learned Gentleman the late Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster), in a speech characterized, I must admit, by that excellent temper and quiet reasoning which he always brings to bear upon anything he lays before the House. The hon. and learned Gentleman told us of the increasing poverty of this great Institution, and of the reasons which induce the Governors to part with some of the Charterhouse property. We have been told that the Institution was £1,100 in debt last year; but when we look at what we can get of the accounts what is the result we find? Why, that the funds of this Institution are perpetually increasing. The income was £22,000 in 1862, and it is now £30,000 a-year. One-half of that money arises not from lands in various counties, some of it known well by me in my neighbourhood in Wiltshire, where the Charity possesses many acres which, in the past, have been by no means made the most of, and which even now might be, I believe, more economically managed; the remainder arises from property in London, which is daily increasing in value, and which there is not the smallest doubt will in the course of a very few years be worth a great deal more than it is now. There is another matter to which I may direct the attention of the House. Out of this sum of £30,000, which is the annual income of this great Institution, £9,000 are spent in outgoings, not in rents going back to the tenants, but in mere expenditure between wind and water, which, as every country gentleman knows, makes a pretty large hole in his income. Nevertheless, I am satisfied that they would look upon an expenditure of 33 per cent out of their income, for such purposes, as a very large amount indeed. I think we have a right to ask that the best use should be made of the funds in the hands of this great Charity. I do not suppose there is a single Member of the Board of Governors who does not devote to the Charity all the time he can; but when we look over the list of names it is quite clear that that cannot amount to a great deal. No doubt, a few of them have devoted a great deal of their time to the affairs of the Charity. I am acquainted with an analogous Institution—the British Museum. In that case you have a very large Board of Trustees, consisting of conspicuous personages —great officers of State, and illustrious men. These illustrious men, when they are not occupied with more profitable duties, do occasionally condescend to go to the British Museum, and I believe it is generally acknowledged that there is no Institution in the Kingdom better managed. The gentlemen who have been selected in this case as Governors of the Charterhouse are men who are quite capable of managing and keeping alive a great Institution of this sort. Therefore, I have no wish to impugn their conduct; but the blame for any defective management rests upon the persons under them, who have been appointed to look after the affairs of the Charity. I cannot help thinking that the funds derived from this Charity might be better, and much more economically managed; and before this question is settled in the off-hand way proposed by the Bill, we have, at any rate, a right to be satisfied that the best use is being made of the funds and resources of the Institution. If the Bill be read a second time, I hope that its provisions will be thoroughly considered in Committee. I trust, however, that it will be sent back by this House, so as to afford the Governors an opportunity of reconsidering it.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin): I will not detain the House for more than a few minutes; but before the House goes to a division there are one or two matters upon which I ought to say a word. In the first place, there has been a suggestion that the questions which have been raised here are questions for consideration by a Committee. Now, I understand that as the Bill does not touch any private interest no Petition has been presented against it, and, therefore, it would not go to a Committee at all, but would come before me personally; and, as I should consider that it was no part of my duty to examine the policy of the Bill, but simply to inquire into its financial arrangements, and see if they were satisfactory, it is necessary that the House should come to a determination on the question of policy on the second reading of the Bill. Upon that question of policy a division must now be taken; it cannot be taken in Committee, because the Bill will not be sent to a Committee. Perhaps I may be allowed to say that I have the greatest respect for the motives which have animated the Governors of the Charterhouse in this matter. They have found that their funds were not sufficient to keep up the objects of the Charity; and they have directed their attention to the best means of increasing those funds. They know that they possess very valuable property in the centre of London, and they see that by selling some of the land that surrounds the Charterhouse buildings while maintaining the buildings themselves they will be able to keep up the number of pensioners for whom Mr. Thomas Sutton originally intended to provide. [Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: They propose to double them.] Yes; if the pensioners are dispersed in the country, but not if they remain together as a family, as Sutton planned. I must point out, in the first place, that the present difficulty would not have arisen if the funds had been distributed as they were 20 years ago, before the separation of the School and Hospital took place. Up to that time there was an absolute allocation of funds either to one purpose or the other; but, as a matter of fact, no difficulty was experienced in apportioning the funds between the two purposes. At that time two-thirds were given towards the maintenance of the poor brethren in the Hospital, and one-third to the School. The new scheme gave half to the Hospital and half to the School, and in consequence of that allocation the funds for the maintenance of the poor brethren have now fallen below the necessities of the case. If the Governors went back to the original plan, and two-thirds were again devoted to the Hospital it would not be necessary to bring in this Bill. Although I do not lay any great stress upon it, it does appear to me that we are dealing with a building of great historical interest, and with an Institution of great associations. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford University (Mr. J. G. Talbot), said that there would not have been much interest taken in the question if it were not for the association of Colonel Newcome with the Charterhouse. Well, I think that is a matter which ought not altogether to be ignored. The people who come here from the other side of the Atlantic invariably try to find out the Charterhouse, and I think every hon. Member must feel that it would be painful if the associations which now surround the Charterhouse were broken up by this Bill. We are all agreed that if there is a necessity for this it is a detestable necessity. Everyone must feel that every stone ought to be turned before a scheme of this character should receive the approval of the House. I admit that it is rather hard on the Governors of the Charterhouse that they should be constrained to keep up an historical monument at the cost of a number of poor brethren who might otherwise be provided for. But I have not heard that any attempt has yet been made to come to what I think would be the ideal solution of the difficulty by the purchase of the ground which surrounds the Charterhouse, and the conversion of it into public gardens. If this were done these buildings might be retained either for their present, or for any other purpose, so that pilgrims to the Charterhouse might find their way there through public gardens rather than through grimy streets of which we have certainly quite enough at present in the neighbourhood of Clerkenwell. I believe that if this Bill were withdrawn we might be able in the course of a year or two to arrive at some happy solution of the difficulty. I do not see that the House of Commons is forced to deal with the matter now, and, therefore, I shall vote against the second reading of the Bill.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER (Isle of Wight): I am unwilling to trespass further upon the time of the House; but I must ask for its indulgence for a few moments while I deal with one or two matters which have been brought forward in the course of the discussion. I sympathize with every word which has been said by hon. Members opposite who desire to preserve the antiquity of old buildings; but it does seem to me as if, at the present moment, there is a disposition to snatch a division against the Bill without understanding the real facts of the case. ["No!"] Perhaps hon. Members will bear with me when I say that scarcely anyone who has spoken against the Bill has not assumed that the old buildings are going to be destroyed. That assumption is absolutely without foundation. ["No, no!"] Hon. Members may say "No," but they cannot have seen the Bill. I know the reality of what I assert. The chapel is not touched; the hall is not touched; the master's lodge is not touched; the master's court is not touched; and the only part of Washhouse Court which is touched is the ground floor. As I have said, there will be an archway at the other end of the road. My statement may be taken for what it is worth; but hon. Members will be quite sure that I am not stating what I do not believe to be true. Anybody, however, can see for himself by going down to the Charterhouse and investigating the matter. What I say is that if this question is to be determined by the old buildings being properly respected, I should like the question to be fully and thoroughly investigated. The Governors are perfectly willing that it should be inquired into, and I believe that the Forms of the House admit of the Bill being referred to a Select Committee. The Chairman of Committees told the House that as the Bill would be practically unopposed it would go before him as an unopposed Private Bill; but I apprehend that there would not be the slightest difficulty in referring it to a Select Committee. With regard to the old buildings, if they are going to be pulled down, or swept away, or dealt with in the manner suggested by many hon. Members, I should not be here to support the measure. It is because I believe that there is a means of preserving, for the benefit of the public for ever, these old buildings that I am desirous of seeing this scheme carried through. One word more in regard to the observations of the noble Viscount opposite (Viscount Lymington), which I certainly think were scarcely called for. The noble Viscount has made an attack upon the Charterhouse itself. But if the Charterhouse is to be made the object of attack, it ought equally to be made on Eton, Winchester, and other public schools. It is not fair thus to reflect on a body of Governors who are attempting to do their duty in the interests of the Charity, and to carry out what was undoubtedly the intention of the Founder—namely, to provide for the support of certain aged men, and under the powers of an Act of Parliament to devote the funds of the Institution to objects similar to those to which other Charities have been devoted. I believe that the antiquarian part of the case is not properly understood. As far back as 1872, it was recommended by the Charity Commissioners that the system of out-pensioners should be adopted. They also thought that the scheme should have gone further, and should have discontinued the Charterhouse as a place of residence for poor brothers. I am afraid that I cannot appeal to the recollection of the Prime Minister, although I have no doubt that he has taken as active a part in the management of the Institution as his other public duties would permit; but I am certain he will bear me out in this—that the Governors of the Hospital have done their utmost from beginning to end to carry out the objects of the Charity to the best of their ability, and with a desire to give effect to the wishes of the Founder. It is idle to suggest that they wish in any way to go against the wishes of the Founder. In the Bill of 1872, of which probably the House has no knowledge, power was taken to establish out-pensioners, and to devote some of the funds of the Charity to that object. I am not suggesting that hon. Members ought to know all these things. I have a knowledge of them from having been educated at the Charterhouse, and knowing all about the Foundation. If the scheme of the Governors be inquired into by means of a Select Committee, and tested to the fullest extent that such a Committee would be able to test, and as it is impossible for the House to test it, I maintain that the wisdom and the judgment of the Governing Body would be supported. The hon. Member for Gateshead (Mr. W. H. James) said he did not care whether it is a question of four acres or of two-and-a-half acres; but I venture to think it is of the greatest importance that the House should understand what the real scheme is. As much as three-and-a-half acres are left for open spaces, the old buildings are not touched except to the small extent I have admitted, and practically it is only the utilization of two-and-three-quarter acres, which are already, to a great extent, covered with buildings. If the House reject the Bill I am afraid they will not do so from a thorough understanding of the question, but from a natural desire, in which I entirely sympathize, to maintain an ancient relic of the past. I trust that that feeling will grow in the minds of hon. Members opposite. I repeat to the House, that this scheme has been most carefully considered by the Governors; that it has received the sanction of the Charity Commissioners; that it has been submitted to the Attorney General and received his approval; and that it has already passed the House of Lords. I wish I could put before the House some of the reasons which have weighed with the Governors, most unwillingly, to come to this decision; but I trust that the scheme will not be rejected, when I and those who deem it our duty to support the measure are quite willing, if it be read a second time, that it should be investigated to the fullest extent by a Select Committee, and where it can be easily ascertained whether I or they who oppose the Bill are right in the matter. I regret that I should have been compelled to occupy so much of the time of the House; but it is a very important matter; and instead of hastily rejecting the Bill, I hope the House will allow it to be read a second time. I am satisfied that the result of passing it will be to carry out rather than to frustrate the objects of the Founder.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): I am sorry to say that I have not heard the whole of the debate; but in reply to one part of the speech of my hon. and learned Friend (Sir Richard Webster) I think he will not deny that, although a good deal of the ancient buildings will be left under this scheme, their character will be completely altered. For example, the ends of Washhouse Court will be pulled down, and a street run through the middle of it.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: I beg the hon. Gentleman's pardon. I am sorry he was not here when I made my speech. What he has stated now is not the fact. The photographs show that no sides of the court will be pulled down, but that an archway will be made at each end of the court through which the road will go.

MR. BRYCE: In other words, the character of the place will be destroyed. An old monastic building will be partially pulled down, and what is now the court turned into a street with an archway at each end and warehouses in proximity. The ends of the court will be destroyed and new archways built. Those who go there to see what a monastic building was ages ago will not be able to determine, because the lofty warehouses which will be erected around it will completely destroy the character of the place. Hardly any great historical city of Europe has lost so many of its antiquities as this capital of ours. There remain in London but few memorials of our mediæval life; and as it is desirable to preserve these as much as possible, I hope the House will refuse to sanction the destruction of one of the finest now remaining. In these days, also, when so many efforts are being made to create new open spaces by the conversion of churchyards and other vacant spots into recreation grounds, I hope the House will think it undesirable to sanction a scheme which will reduce three acres of open space to a little more than one acre. When it is considered how much good might be done to the poorer inhabitants of London, and especially to the children of the poor, by appropriating this ground for playground and recreation purposes, I trust that the House, if for that reason alone, will not consent to read the Bill a second time.

MR. BERESFORD HOPE (Cambridge University): I am not going to detain the House very long; but I feel that the proper course to take is to adjourn the debate. The more it has gone on the clearer it is that we are involved in a maze, and that we are discussing a matter of which a great many of us know very little, and about which there is a great deal of confusion. I will only, myself, venture to say that I have been over the spot, and have accurately examined the buildings. Judging from the discussion now going on, I consider that the House is not at present in a condition to deal with the matter satisfactorily. In these circumstances, I think the best course would be to adjourn the debate, not for any length of time, but simply for a few days, in order that a full opportunity should be afforded for reconsidering the matter. We are all of us animated by the same feeling—namely, a desire to preserve these valuable remains; but we do not all of us see the method of doing so in precisely the same manner. I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. J. G. TALBOT rose——

Mr. SPEAKER: I must remind the hon. Gentleman that he has already spoken.

Mr. J. G. TALBOT: I was about to second the Motion for the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is not competent for the hon. Gentleman to second that Motion.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): I beg to second the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*Mr. Beresford Hope.*)

Mr. J. G. TALBOT: I simply wish, in one sentence, to explain the reason which induces me to support the Motion for the adjournment of the debate. I listened with the greatest interest to the speech of the hon. Gentleman the Chairman of Committees, and the suggestion which he made certainly seemed to me worthy of the most serious attention. Any suggestions of the kind I am satisfied would be carefully considered by the Governors. At present, I have had no opportunity of communicating with my Colleagues, only one of whom—the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister—is now present. Whether the right hon. Gentleman agrees with me or not I do not know; but the suggestion which has been made by the Chairman of Committees will, I have no doubt, be carefully weighed and considered by the Governors of the Charterhouse. I, therefore, think the debate ought to be adjourned in order to give them an opportunity of considering that suggestion.

Mr. STORY-MASKELYNE (Wilts, Cricklade): I must repudiate the suggestion which has been made that hon. Members who have opposed the scheme do not know what they are talking about. The reason given by the last speaker is an admirable one for rejecting the Bill at once. In that case, the Governors would have ample leisure to consider the suggestion of the Chairman of Committees. As to the observations of the hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight (Sir Richard Webster), that hon. Members do not know what they are talking about——

Mr. SPEAKER: I must remind the hon. Member that the Question now before the House is the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. STORY-MASKELYNE: Well, Sir, then I will say that I consider that if we need more knowledge it will best be attained by refusing the adjournment and rejecting the Bill.

Mr. W. H. JAMES (Gateshead): I regard the Motion which has just been moved by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Beresford Hope) and seconded by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) as really a wilful waste of the time of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think that the words "wilful waste of the time of the House" are a proper expression to use.

Mr. W. H. JAMES: I withdraw the words at once, and I will substitute "an unintentional waste of the time of the House." I believe the House has already given full consideration to the matter, and as it is thoroughly understood I trust that the House will be allowed to go to a division at once.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 99; Noes 198: Majority 99.—(Div. List, No. 89.)

Original Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER (Isle of Wight): After the division which has just taken place, I do not propose to trouble the House with a further division; but I will ask leave to withdraw the Bill, in order that the matter may be further considered by the Governors.

Mr. W. H. JAMES: In that case, I will ask leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Bill *withdrawn.*

MOTIONS.

GAS AND WATER PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 3) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Charles Acland, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under "The Gas and Water Works Facilities Act, 1870," relating to Bridport Water, Deal Water, Kettering Water, Southwold Water, and Lyndhurst Gas and Water, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Charles Acland and Mr. Mundella.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 206.]

WATER PROVISIONAL ORDERS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Charles Acland, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under "The Gas and Water Works Facilities Act, 1870," relating to Cranleigh Water, Farnham Water, Frith Hill, Godalming, and Farncombe Water, Howden Water, and Tonbridge Water, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Charles Acland and Mr. Mundella.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 207.]

QUESTIONS.

EGYPT—ARMY OF OCCUPATION—MEDICAL OFFICERS AT SUAKIN.

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY (Glasgow, Blackfriars) asked the Secretary of State for War, How many of the medical officers serving at Suakin have died or been invalided since the occupation of that place by the British Troops; and, whether the medical officers serving there now will shortly be removed to a more healthy climate?

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. Herbert Gladstone) (Leeds, W.) (who replied) said: Three medical officers serving at Suakin have died, and ten have been invalided. The medical officers of the British Army are being removed from Suakin as the British garrison is withdrawn.

EXCHEQUER DEPOSITS.

Mr. LIONEL COHEN (Paddington, N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, What is the estimated amount for the current year of the Exchequer deposits and banking deposits which the First Lord of the Treasury described as—

> "Enabling the Chancellor of the Exchequer to exercise so large a power of purchase in the stock market as effectually to counteract any abnormal depression;"

what has been the amount of these deposits in each of the last three financial years, and in what manner have they been employed; whether any Return is annually made to Parliament of the exercise of any such power as that alluded to by the First Lord of the Treasury; and, what are the Acts of Parliament under which such power is conferred?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.), in reply, said, he was not prepared to state the amount referred to in this Question.

POST OFFICE (SCOTLAND)—MAILS TO THE OUTER HEBRIDES.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If the contract for the carriage of the mails to and from the Outer Hebrides to Oban was thrown open to public competition; and, whether it was necessary that the service to Tiree and Coll should be attached to Barra and Uist, instead of to Tobermory as formerly?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): The contract for the carriage of the mails to and from the outer Hebrides to Oban was not thrown open to competition, but was a matter of arrangement with the Highland Fisheries Company. Tiree and Coll were formerly served by sailing packet from Tobermory, but are now served from Oban by the steam packet which also serves South Uist and Barra. The change, which is considered to be a very great improvement, would not have been practicable if the direct communication with Tobermory had been preserved.

TENURE OF LAND—HOMESTEAD AND EXEMPTION LAWS IN THE UNITED STATES.

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether, having regard to proposals which have been made in this Country for legislation of a character similar to that of the Homestead and Exemption Laws prevailing in the United States of America, he will take steps to obtain Reports regarding the nature, extent, and operations of those Laws from the British Consular Agents or other available authorities in the United States?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): The subject referred to in the Question of my hon. and learned Friend is one of great interest, and Her Majesty's Minister at Washington and those of Her Majesty's Consular officers in the United States who seem likely to be able to obtain satisfactory information will be instructed to furnish such Reports as he suggests. I may, however, observe that in the newer Western States, where chiefly these homestead laws are in operation, there are very few British Consular officers, so that I cannot promise my hon. Friend that the information will be as complete as we should desire. In the meantime, I may tell him that he will find much matter of interest regarding the homestead and exemption laws in the collection of State Constitutions published under the authority of Congress.

BURMAH—MILITARY EXECUTIONS—COLONEL HOOPER.

Mr. JAMES MACLEAN (Oldham) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, If the inquiry into the charges brought against Colonel Hooper, late Provost Marshal at Mandalay, has been concluded, and if it is the case, as reported in *The Indian Daily News*, that—

> "Mr. Moylan, *The Times* correspondent, has failed to substantiate several of his assertions, and that Mr. Bernard, the Chief Commissioner, remarked before the Court Martial that he considered the statements which had been made were not to be relied upon?"

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Stafford Howard) (Gloucester, Thornbury): No Report has been received from the Government of India whether the Court of Inquiry has closed its proceedings. It is understood that the Court was not required to form an opinion on the case, but merely to collect and record evidence whereon to enable the Judge Advocate General in India to decide whether charges could be framed on which Colonel Hooper could be brought before a Court Martial for trial.

RAILWAYS (INDIA)—THE NAGPORE-BENGAL RAILWAY.

Mr. JAMES MACLEAN (Oldham) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, If his attention has been called to a recent Letter from the Bombay Chamber of Commerce to the Bombay Government, representing that the construction of the Nagpore-Bengal Railway has been delayed, and

> "the ultimate success of the proposed Company for developing the undertaking seriously endangered, by the Secretary of State insisting upon terms from the promoters which are not likely to prove acceptable to the London market;"

and, if there is any prospect of the removal of this cause of delay in the commencement of a railway which the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1884 reported to be "one of first-class importance and urgency, on account of its protective value," and the productiveness of which has been shown by the offers of two distinct first to construct it?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Stafford Howard) (Gloucester, Thornbury): The Indian newspapers have published the letter from the Bombay Chamber of Commerce referred to by the hon. Member; but it has not been received officially at the India Office. The commencement of the railway has been delayed, not because the Secretary of State in Council has "insisted upon terms from the promoters which are not likely to prove acceptable to the London Money Market," but in consequence of the pressure upon Indian finances at the present time, and the large obligations already incurred for frontier and other railways in course of construction. When this pressure abates there will be no delay in considering the claims of this line, the importance of which is admitted. I must add that I have not been able to find in the Report of the Select Committee the words quoted in the second part of the Question.

GIBRALTAR—SIR JOHN ADYE.

Viscount CURZON (Bucks, Wycombe) asked the Secretary of State for

War, Whether his attention has been called to the general expression of feeling amongst the inhabitants of Gibraltar in favour of retaining Sir John Adye in the office he now holds as Governor; whether a Petition, signed by nearly 1,300 merchants, tradesmen, &c. living there, in favour of his retention, has been received by Her Majesty's Government; whether there have been instances of the term of office, in similar cases, being extended; and, whether Her Majesty's Government will extend Sir John Adye's term of office for a short period?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. HERBERT GLADSTONE) (who replied) said: Yes, Sir; Her Majesty's Government are aware of the feeling among the inhabitants of Gibraltar in favour of retaining Sir John Adye as Governor. A Petition has been received, signed by over 1,200 persons, giving expression to that feeling. Her Majesty's Government regret that under the present Regulations, as embodied in the Royal Warrant, it is not possible to sanction any prolongation of his term of office. There have been instances in which the term of office has been prolonged; but in such cases the officers were holding their appointments at the time the Regulation was made, and their vested interests were preserved by the terms of the Warrant.

NAVY—H.M.S. "COLLINGWOOD"—BURSTING OF THE 43-TON GUN.

CAPTAIN PRICE (Devonport) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether an inquiry will be made into the cause of the bursting of the 43-ton gun on board H.M.S. *Collingwood;* and, if so, by whom will the inquiry be conducted?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. HIBBERT) (Oldham), in reply, said, that his hon. Friend the Surveyor General of the Ordnance had stated last night that the question of the bursting of the 43-ton gun would be inquired into by the Ordnance Committee of the War Office; and after they had reported his noble Friend Lord Ripon would suggest to the Secretary for War that an inquiry should be made by an independent Committee with regard to the remaining guns on board the ship in question.

GREENWICH HOSPITAL—THE WIVES AND FAMILIES OF NAVAL PENSIONERS.

CAPTAIN PRICE (Devonport) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether any alteration is to be made as regards the allowances to pensioners when in hospital; and, if so, when will it be made known to them?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. R. W. DUFF) (Banffshire) (who replied) said: It is proposed to obtain an Order in Council to sanction an improved rate of allowance to the wives and families of naval pensioners admitted into naval hospitals at the expense of Greenwich Hospital funds, and also to the men in certain cases.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, in view of the importance and interest of the Debate on the Second Reading of the Government of Ireland Bill, he will, in accordance with precedent, propose that it should be continued de die in diem, except on Wednesday, until it is concluded?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): This is a matter in respect of which I am not able as yet to form a forecast of what the desire may be for a prolonged debate. But probably on Monday I may be in a position to form that forecast, and it will be the duty of the Government then to consider the subject, and very probably to make a proposal in the direction which the right hon. Gentleman has indicated.

CROFTERS (SCOTLAND) (No. 2) BILL—NAMES OF THE COMMISSIONERS.

MR. CRAIG-SELLAR (Lanarkshire, Partick) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, in view of the precedent in the case of the Irish Land Act, he will state the names of the Commissioners under the Crofters (Scotland) Bill before the Bill passes the Third Reading?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I wish heartily that we were in a condition to give the hon. Member the names for which he not unreasonably asks. But we are not in that condition yet, and I think that he would hardly say that it would be desirable to delay the third reading of the Bill for that purpose. I can assure the hon. Member that we shall lose no time in concluding the arrangement.

SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE—REPLY OF THE GREEK GOVERNMENT.

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he can give the House any information as to the reply which has been sent by the Greek Government to the last communication addressed to that Government by the Powers, and as to any steps which may have been taken, or which may be contemplated, in order to secure the object which the Powers have in view?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): The information which I can give the House to-day is very partial information; but I will give it as far as it goes. The reply of the Greek Government has been received, and it is an unsatisfactory reply. It makes no addition, or only a verbal addition, if any; but I believe in substance no addition to what have already been called inadequate and unsatisfactory assurances. That being the case, our intelligence is, as I have said, not complete; but I am in possession of intelligence that the British Minister has quitted Athens, and that so likewise have the Ministers of Germany, Austria, and Italy. Further information will probably arrive very shortly.

RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC BILL—CONTROL OF CANALS.

Mr. HERBERT GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked the President of the Board of Trade Whether, in any further legislation with regard to canals, he can see his way to take into consideration the recommendation of the Railway Committee of 1882, which was to the effect that it was impolitic that Railway Companies should have control, either directly or indirectly, of canal navigation, and that where canals are already under the control of Railway Companies Parliament should endeavour to secure their use to the fullest extent?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Mundella) (Sheffield, Brightside), in reply, said, the subject was one to which the Government attached great importance in the interests of the trading community. It was already illegal for Railway Companies to acquire canals without the express sanction of Parliament; but the spirit and intention of the law had been too often successfully evaded. The Government were now considering how far it was possible, by the insertion of clauses in the Railway and Canal Traffic Bill, to secure that the provisions of the Standing Orders of this House, and also the recommendations made by the Committee in 1882, should be complied with, and he hoped they should be able to succeed.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

POSTAL SERVICE (BRITISH POSSESSIONS)—RATES OF POSTAGE.

RESOLUTION.

Mr. HUTTON (Manchester, N.), in rising to move—

> "That the interests of the people urgently require that on letters, newspapers, and printed matter there should be a discontinuance of the charges of higher rates of postage in Great Britain than those which are charged to the public in other countries for Postal Service by British steamers carrying Mails to and from the Colonies and the possessions of Great Britain in India and elsewhere,"

said, the question affected something like four-fifths of the population of the British Empire; and what he asked was not a boon, but a simple act of justice. Something like double the amount of postage was charged for letters sent abroad by our own steamers than for letters posted abroad for the possession of this country, and an act of injustice was therefore done to our fellow-subjects. He did not propose to interfere with the fiscal administration of the country, nor would he say a word against the administration of the Post Office. As far as inland postage was concerned the Department was most ably administered; but in regard to the foreign and Colonial postage an injustice was done to the interests of the country. It was calculated some time ago that the population of this country had increased something like 1 per cent per annum, while the communications through the Post Office had increased something like 4 per cent per annum in the last 30 years. In England and the United States there was, at the present time, about one letter per head of the population written every week; in Australia the proportion was about one letter per head every two weeks, while in India it did not exceed one per head every twelve months. Were we to reduce the postal rates, there would, in his opinion, be a very considerable increase in the amount of correspondence sent abroad; and instead of the Treasury incurring a loss, there would probably be a very considerable addition to the profits of the Post Office. The meaning and purport of his Motion was that this country should not have, as it now had, simply a Treaty on paper with the different countries of Europe, but that the British people should be put in the position of taking advantage of the benefits to be derived from the Postal Union. Some weeks back the Secretary to the Treasury stated that all the civilized nations in Europe and America belonged to the Postal Union, and that its representatives met and fixed the rates of postage for the different countries forming the Union. He further stated that the charge fixed for postage was 2½*d.*, with the power to charge another 2½*d.* for ocean service. But England was the only country which had taken advantage of the power to charge the extra 2½*d.* for ocean service; and the result was that if advantage was to be taken of the Postal Union people must go out of the British Empire to do it. A great injustice was thus inflicted on the people of Great Britain, on our Colonies, and on the population of India. The last meeting of the Postal Congress took place some time in February. The result of it was that while this country lost money every year it allowed foreign countries to use our Post Offices and steamers to send their letters by at a less charge than we paid ourselves. He wished to draw the attention of the House to the rates now charged. Every letter sent from this country to India, Ceylon, China, and the East weighing ½ oz. had to pay a postage 5*d.*; whereas letters sent from any other country in Europe to the same places paid only 25 centimes, or something less than 2½*d.* The same difference occurred with regard to newspapers. Every newspaper 2 oz. in weight sent from this country to the places he had named was charged 1½*d.*, while in Calais the same newspaper could be posted for ½*d.* Commercial papers going from this country paid 7½*d.*, while in Calais they could be posted for 2½*d.* In the case of samples, a 4 oz. packet for the East cost in this country 3*d.* postage; but in France and Germany only 1*d.* The French had their own steamers running from Marseilles to India by which might be sent from here a 10 oz. packet for 5*d.*; whereas the cost by English steamer was 7½*d.* If the Government pleaded that they were losing money on the present service, the reason obviously was that samples were sent by the French steamers because they were taken at a great reduction. The same anomaly existed with regard to postage in India. Commercial and legal documents to this country were charged 3½*d.*, and to other European countries 2¼*d.* The same excessive rates for postage to the East were also charged in this country for letters and other things sent to our Colonies, to the West Indies, and to the West Coast of Africa. Letters for these Colonies might be posted in any part of Europe—Odessa for instance—and sent thence *vid* Liverpool, Southampton, or wherever the mail might go from, at a charge of 2½*d.*; whereas people living in the neighbourhood from which the mail started had to pay 4*d.* That was a great injustice to the mercantile community of this country. The same difference in rates applied to printed papers; 1*d.* for 2 oz. was charged for printed papers in Great Britain, while they could be sent from across the Channel for ½*d.* It was extraordinary that these anomalies should have existed so long as they had done; and a great many mercantile men told him that they were unaware of them till recently, when they discovered them by accident. It might even be worth while, in the case of firms having a large correspondence with the East, to send a clerk every Friday morning to Calais to post their letters. He had heard of one firm which was able to save £200 to £300 a-year by adopting that plan. He was informed by one of Her Majesty's Consuls in New Caledonia, who was a scientific man, that he could send a letter to England for 2½*d.* but that it cost 5*d.* for a reply. That gentleman was in the habit of making up boxes of natural history collection and sending them to England, and he found it much more advantageous to send them through France, as the charge was only ½*d.* for every 2 oz. up to 10 oz. Moreover, since he had sent through France he had had scarcely any breakages; whereas the same boxes sent to England were nearly always broken, and were then charged letter rates. This was the experience of the advantages of the Postal Union to England by a gentleman in Her Majesty's Service. It was stated on a former occasion by the right hon. Gentleman that the Colonies had expressed no dissatisfaction with the present arrangements. The Colonists whom he had met in this country, especially Indians, had expressed the very greatest dissatisfaction at the large charge made for the conveyance of letters from this country. The Civil Service Estimates showed that India contributed £70,000 a-year to the Postal Service to the East, while Ceylon and the Straits Settlements and other places made up the subsidy to about £83,000 a-year. The Postal Report published last year stated the estimated receipts for the postage of letters and papers between India and this country to be £55,000. He was informed that that sum of £55,000 did not cover the whole of the Post Office receipts for the transmission of our mail to India. Mulhall's Tables for 1884 stated the amount of letters received in India from Great Britain in a year as 9,000,000. At 5*d.* each those would have yielded £180,000 per annum. The estimated receipts of £55,000 were obviously without taking the Government Correspondence and despatches into account. He did not believe that the ultimate loss to this country, if his proposal was adopted, would exceed £120,000, which ought not to be charged to the Post Office, because the lines of steamers were subsidized, not merely for carrying purposes, but that we might have good vessels at the disposal of the country in the event of any emergency arising. If we wanted a thing done properly we must pay a fair and proper price for it; but as Her Majesty's Government did incur expenses for subsidies for mail and telegraph service to Zanzibar, West Africa, and St. Helena, and charged those expenses to the Imperial Exchequer for other similar services rendered, he failed to see why that deficiency should be charged to the Post Office Revenues. He trusted the facts he had put forward would receive the attention of Her Majesty's Government; and he hoped the House would have not only an expression of sympathy such as they had had on previous occasions, but that Her Majesty's Government would be able to see their way to rectify what was really a great injustice on those men who went out as the pioneers of our commerce and civilization, to benefit the trade and industry of the country, and who ought, at least, to look forward to receiving their communications from the Mother Country regularly and at a cheap rate. He believed such a course would bring closer the ties of friendship and sympathy between England and her Colonies, and would reflect credit not only on that House, but on Her Majesty's Government. He would ask the House to consider the auspicious words uttered by Her Majesty the Queen, a few days ago, when she expressed the hope that—

> "This undertaking may be the means of imparting a stimulus to commercial interests in all parts of the British dominion by encouraging the arts of peace and industry, and by strengthening the bonds of union which now existed in every portion of the Empire."

He trusted the Government would consider the sentiments expressed in those words, and would endeavour to at least do that justice which every loyal subject of Her Majesty was entitled to. In conclusion, the hon. Member moved the Resolution which stood in his name.

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE (Worcester, Evesham) seconded the Resolution.

Amendment proposed,

> To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "the interests of the people urgently require that on letters, newspapers, and printed matter there should be a discontinuance of the charges of higher rates of postage in Great Britain than those which are charged to the public in other countries for Postal Service by British steamers carrying Mails to and from the Colonies and the possessions of Great Britain in India and elsewhere,"—(*Mr. James Hutton,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.) said, he was somewhat in a difficulty in dealing with this Resolution, because it was, in another shape, a repetition of a Motion brought forward on March 30, to which it had been his duty to reply in a speech of considerable length, and he did not wish to inflict upon the House a repetition of the statement he then made. The hon. Member, perhaps, would therefore excuse him if he did not go again into the Colonial question. He was also rather puzzled by the difference between the hon. Member's speech and the terms of his Motion. However, on the present occasion he would confine his remarks exclusively to the injustice of which the hon. Member complained—namely, that letters posted in England for India were charged 5*d.*, whereas if those letters were posted in Paris for India they would only be charged 2½*d.*—the letters being carried by the British mail steamer—and that, therefore, there was the apparent injustice of a differential rate between this country and France. He might observe, at the outset, that there was no such differential rate at all, except with reference to the two places mentioned by the hon. Member—namely, the West Indies and the West Coast of Africa. There was no differential rate for a letter between this country and France to Australia or Canada or our principal Colonies. The only differential rate was between this country and the West Indies and the Gold Coast; and the postal communication between Great Britain and the West Indies and the Gold Coast was such a bagatelle that it was hardly worth the trouble of calculation. The question really rested upon the postage between this country and India, and on that he would give an explanation which he hoped would be satisfactory to the hon. Member. Some years ago this country went into the Postal Union, in which there was a uniform rate of charge—namely, 2½—whenever a letter was delivered within the limits of the Union. Certain countries inside the Postal Union were great carriers by sea, and some others were great carriers by land; and we must, as commercial and business men, look at both sides of the question. We carried the ocean postage, but we did not carry the land postage. He was sorry to say there was heavy loss on the whole of the postage; and though there was an apparent loss in our carrying letters from France to India for 2½*d.*, they must remember, as against that, that they had their letters carried for the same rate across the Continent of Europe; and the letters carried at a cheap rate by us were small in comparison with the letters carried at a cheap rate across the Continent. When these terms were fixed, those in charge of the interests of this country thought they made a good bargain, and he also was satisfied that they did, because, even if they carried letters from France to India at a low rate, they got a corresponding advantage upon the other side. The postage between Europe and India was almost entirely English postage, as the commercial transactions were practically English. Last year India bought something like £52,000,000 worth of goods from Europe, and of that amount £50,000,000 was from the United Kingdom, and only £845,465 from France. The receipt from French postage to India was £1,600, and no corresponding advantage would be gained by doubling that amount. The hon. Member said they ought to deal with this question on the principle of justice. Well, the principle of justice was that a man should pay for what the service rendered to him cost, and our Indian and Colonial Postal Service was carried on at a loss of £1,000 a-day. [*An interruption.*] "Cheap," an hon. Member said; that might be so. [Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): No, not cheap; chiefly India.] Oh, chiefly India. What was the Indian correspondence? It was a correspondence mainly between the Anglo-Indians and home. He did not wish to depreciate the importance of that correspondence; but who ought to pay for it? So far from that correspondence being a failure, the increase was enormous, and the business communications were of vital importance to this country. The principal loss of £136,000 was upon India, and they taxed the Natives of India something like £68,000 in order that the Anglo-Indian community might have their letters carried at a considerably less cost than that service entailed. The House, he thought, understood the nature of the case. They were losing £365,000 a-year by their foreign and Colonial postage; but they made no differential charges except with India, West Africa, and the West Indies. The hon. Member contrasted the French and English Post Offices unfavourably to that of this country; but in that contrast he might have referred to the charges for internal postage in France. In France they charge 1½*d.* for every letter only weighing half an ounce, whereas in this country we only charged 1*d.* for a whole ounce. The hon. Gentleman's argument was that because we carried, say, one-tenth, or a much smaller proportion, of the correspondence at a great loss, under a bargain which they thought redressed itself in another Department, they should carry the other nine-tenths also at a loss. If we reduced the postage to India it would entail a further loss, and was that loss to fall on the English or the Indian taxpayer? He knew the answer which would come from more than one quarter of the House—namely, that the Post Office should be treated as one concern, and that, as there was a profit of £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 a-year, the loss should come out of that sum. Rightly or wrongly, they had made the Postal Revenue a portion of the Imperial Revenue; and if they were going to say that the whole Revenue of that Department was to be spent for the postal consumers, if he might so describe them, and were prepared to put on 1*d.* or 2*d.* extra on the Income Tax to make up that loss, did they not think that the people at home, whose letters made up that profit, would make a claim to share in the benefit by reduced charges on their own letters? They would have an outcry from the working and commercial classes, upon whom the postal charges were a heavy tax, and these classes would say that those who earned the profits had the first claim on the benefit. He hoped the House would not embark on so great a question as that; and he was satisfied, from the consideration he had given the subject, that the wise and experienced permanent officials of the Post Office, under Postmasters General of both political Parties, had made the best bargain for this country, and that at present the English Post Office would contrast favourably with any Post Office in the world.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," again proposed.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS—HOURS OF POLLING.—OBSERVATIONS.

MR. T. FRY (Darlington), who had on the Paper a Notice to the following effect:—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the hours of Polling at School Board Elections in Cities and Boroughs should be from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m,"

said, that the only objection which he had heard to making this desirable alteration was the extra expense which would be incurred; but, on looking into the matter, he found that the extra expense would be a very small matter indeed, for all the books, the printing, and other expenses would remain the same. There might be a demand for an increase in the fee to solicitors, agents, and clerks; but even these were usually charged as full days. However, the question of expense was hardly worth mentioning, considering the great convenience to large masses of the population which would result from the extension of the hours of polling in the manner which he proposed, and also the removal of a very serious injustice, which was keenly felt, more especially by the working classes. Numbers of people were prevented from voting, especially in large centres of population, owing to the early hour at which the poll was closed in many towns, and this was especially the case in the town which he had the honour to represent. Very many railway men went to work at an early hour in the morning, and did not return till long after the hour of closing the poll, and he knew that they felt this to be an injustice from which they ought to be relieved. He had himself been a witness to a scene where a large number of men were crowding round the door of the polling station, but who, to their evident disappointment and annoyance, were unable to vote owing to the closing of the poll before they could get in. He could not see any reason in the world why the hours of polling which prevailed in London should not prevail throughout the country, or, at all events, in all the large centres of population. It had been suggested that the fixing of the hours of polling should be left to the Town Councils or other Local Authorities; but there was the objection to this that there would be no uniformity in the hours in, perhaps, adjoining districts, and there would always be the suspicion of political or religious influences being brought to bear in the matter for Party purposes. He had, therefore, come to the conclusion that it would be much the best plan to fix the hours of polling at School Board elections all over the country as they were fixed for Parliamentary elections—from 8 o'clock in the morning to 8 in the evening—a plan which he believed would remove all feelings of irritation and injustice from the minds of the working classes. He was hopeful that his Motion, not involving a Party question, but simply one which regarded the convenience of the people, might be accepted by the Government. He had received many letters from different parts of the country approving his object. The hon. Member for Portsmouth had asked him to state that many of his constituents employed in the Dockyards were prevented from voting on the last occasion because the hours were so fixed that they had not time to record their votes. As the preceding Motion had been negatived, he could not take a division; but, in answer to a Question he had put a few weeks ago, the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council said that it would not be necessary to bring in a Bill to effect the reform which he (Mr. T. Fry) advocated, but that if there was a sufficiently strong expression of opinion by the House in favour of the alteration the object could be effected by an Order in Council. He had, therefore, brought the proposal before the House in the form of a Resolution, and he hoped that the House might accept it without opposition.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester) said, if the Forms of the House had permitted, he should have been happy to second the Motion. He believed that this proposal, if carried out, would be very acceptable to the working men, especially in the large towns of the North, who took a great interest in School Board elections. Although they were unable to take the sense of the House upon it, he trusted that the right hon. Gentleman would give such a reply as to render it unnecessary to take further action. As far as regarded the additional expense caused by extending the hours of election for the School Boards, he ventured to say that in local government legislation, which he hoped the House would be able to undertake before very long, they would be able to simplify the system of elections, the number of which were now bringing local government into disrepute. It was a perfect nuisance that there should so frequent elections; and he trusted that the various details of local government would be entrusted to Committees of one elected Body. But there was no reason why the working men should be shut out by reason of the hours of polling being too short. He could show that many men had been shut out from voting at School Board elections, because they must vote either in the dinner hour or in the evening. But even if they cost a little more, he thought that the elections provided for by that House ought to be real elections. It was very unreasonable that working men should be shut out from voting just at the last moment, when they had not been able to vote at breakfast time, or at a midday hour of refreshment. He thought the good sense of the Motion was so self-evident that he need not trouble the House longer in supporting it.

Mr. SAUNDERS (Hull, East) said, that during a recent School Board election at Hull it was found that many working men were prevented voting by the early closing of the poll; and it would be a great convenience to his constituents if the Government could see their way to adopt the Motion. Hon. Members generally seemed to be in favour of it, and he understood that the Government could give effect to the Resolution without the passing of an Act of Parliament. It was most desirable that the public should have equal facilities in all places for recording their votes at School Board elections.

Colonel E. HUGHES (Woolwich) said, that as a Member of the London School Board, he was in a position to testify that it had been a great convenience to have the poll allowed to remain open till 8 p.m. As London had been made the scene of an experiment in keeping open the poll at Parliamentary Elections till 8 o'clock, which was afterwards extended to other towns, he thought the experience of London in School Board elections might be utilized for the whole country.

An hon. Member said, he regretted that the Motion was confined to boroughs and towns. There were many other populous places where it would be of advantage to extend the hours of polling. He hoped the Government would make a uniform rule all over the country.

Mr. CAINE (Barrow-in-Furness) said, he wished to call attention to the hardship of the borough of Tottenham, which was outside the Metropolitan area, and, therefore, did not enjoy the extended hours in force in the Metropolis. Large numbers of the residents were in the daily habit of leaving for town by early morning trains, and they did not return, many of them, till after 8 o'clock in the evening. At the recent Parliamentary election he found that some 700 or 800 electors were disqualified in consequence of the hour being even so late as 8 o'clock; and with regard to the School Board, he was satisfied the disfranchisement was much more extensive. The same rule applied to Liverpool, where there were generally from 8,000 to 10,000 persons employed on the steamers on the river, many of which men did not get away from their work till 7 or 8 in the evening, and it was impossible for them to get ashore in time to vote in the country districts. He was satisfied, from what he knew generally of electioneering opinion throughout the country, that it would be a most popular thing if the Government would grant the request of the hon. Member for Darlington.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester) said, he did not see why the polls should not be kept open for 12 hours even in rural districts. It was the electors, and not the officials, who had to be considered. In some quarters the working classes had a strong impression that the hours were deliberately fixed so as to exclude them from polling.

Mr. E. RIDER COOK (West Ham, N.) said, he quite sympathized with the remarks of the hon. Member for Barrow-in-Furness (Mr. Caine), for the borough which he represented, the borough of West Ham, being, like Tottenham, outside the Metropolitan area, was limited to the shorter hours. That was felt as a real hardship by an enormous population.

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan) said, that if there was a hardship with regard to the Parliamentary elections it must be still more the case with regard to School Board elections, because there the working men's children were most affected. He thought, therefore, that on the occasion of School Board elections the working men ought to have a real opportunity of expressing their opinion. In such a borough as that which he had the honour to represent, many of the working classes were occupied during the day at some distance from their homes, and it was only at the latter part of the day, when they got home, that they had the opportunity of voting. Unless there was an extension of the hours they were really excluded from the franchise. It was really a matter of great importance, in the interest of elementary education, that the working classes should be led to take the greatest interest in it, and that they should express their opinions in the most ample manner.

Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Nottingham, S.) said, that an hon. Member had raised an objection on the ground of expense to the carrying into effect of the Motion of the hon. Member for Darlington, and other hon. Gentlemen had spoken against it on the ground that it would have the effect of making too great a tax on the energies of those engaged in taking the poll at School Board elections. He held that it was not necessary to have the energies of the officials taking the poll taxed for the whole of the day, except in populous places. In small rural parishes he considered that there might be a cessation in taking the poll at that time of the day when few persons attended to record their votes. Then the working classes would be enabled, by keeping the poll open till 8 p.m., to record their votes, without much extra trouble or expense to those conducting the elections, and there would be a cessation of taking votes during the afternoon. He desired to see the hours of polling extended, because he was anxiously looking forward to the time when there would be School Boards in every district, and therefore the hours of polling should be as late in the rural as well as in the town communities. The voters ought to be afforded adequate facilities for recording their votes, and the more interest they took in School Boards the better would it be for all concerned. He hoped that the

Government would approach this matter with the object of establishing a uniform system all over the country, and that before long this would be realized.

Mr. EDWARD RUSSELL (Glasgow, Bridgeton) said that, as representing a large constituency like Glasgow, he was glad to have an opportunity of supporting this Motion. As the Vice President of the Council well knew, the School Board institutions of Glasgow were conducted on a remarkable scale of efficiency; and not only so, but they were associated with a great deal of effort on the part of the members of the School Board, who obtained an insight into the minds of the people, and did a great deal of good from day to day by bringing social influences to bear on the people. He knew that in connection with elections the members of the School Board had the means and opportunity of exercising an admirable influence on the people, and that the more they obtained the concurrence of the people in the electoral operations the better they were pleased, and the better they found the education of the children to progress. Experience showed in Glasgow that not only could the hours of polling be extended with safety, but with great advantage, because the more the feelings of the people were enlisted in the matter the greater was the influence of the education in the homes of the people, as well as in the training of the children.

Mr. L. FRY (Bristol, N.) said, that, as the Representative of a large Western city which took a great deal of interest in the question of elementary education, he considered that the proposal now before the House would, if adopted, be of great advantage. It was not possible to take a division upon the Motion; but he hoped that the Government would see their way to accept it, because the right hon. Gentleman (Sir Lyon Playfair) would not require to pass an Act of Parliament to give effect to its proposal. There was a strong desire among the people of Bristol that every facility and opportunity should be afforded to the electors to record their votes at School Board elections.

Dr. FOSTER (Chester) said, that while agreeing with the proposal he thought its scope should be widened, as he desired to see it extended to all localities in which School Boards now existed, or might be hereafter created. Public elementary schools were of such importance to the working classes that every facility possible should be given to them to influence and direct the policy of School Boards. He knew the extension of hours would be popular in Birmingham and other large towns, and he believed it would be equally popular and advantageous in less populous districts.

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir Lyon Playfair) (Leeds, S.) said, the consensus of opinion in the House upon this subject had been very marked. It was obvious from all parts of the House there was a desire for fair play, and that there should be an opportunity for all classes to record their votes with the greatest amount of convenience. The position of the question at present was this—In London the working classes had 12 hours in which they could record their votes; in parishes and in boroughs they had seven hours allotted; but there had been a suspicion, and it was a very unfortunate suspicion, that the hours had been occasionally fixed for certain Party purposes. That probably was not true, but it had produced an unfavourable impression; and in the question of education such an impression ought, if possible, to be removed. He thought the general expression of opinion for extending the hours was of such a character as would induce the Privy Council at once to consent to a prolongation of the hours of polling. It was simply a question of expense. Hitherto, in the populous districts—in parishes especially, and small towns—the expense had been kept down to a minimum, and very small fees had been paid. For instance, £1 had been paid to a clerk for attention to the duties for seven hours. It was possible that it might be found they would not be able to obtain persons to attend at all the polling stations upon the same economical terms; but the increase of expense in ordinary cases would not be very large. Had he not heard such a general expression of opinion in favour of keeping all polling stations open for 12 hours, the suggestion which he would have put before the House would have been that at small or less populous places, where 12 hours might not have been required, the purpose might be met by limiting the hours to eight, but that the hours should be specified—say from 12 to 8 o'clock—so that the working man might vote either at his dinner hour or after the day's work was completed. He would not, therefore, give a pledge that there should be a uniform system of 12 hours all over the country, but that 12 hours might be granted where there were considerably populous places and considerable towns. In his opinion, eight hours —from noon till 8 at night — would be a better rule where the population was small, and where it was desirable not to increase the expense. If that met the view of the House, he could say that the Department which he had the honour to represent would take care that in the next Order in Council there was an extension of the hours for polling given in the sense of the views which had been expressed.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.) said, he was glad to hear the observations of the right hon. Gentleman, because it would be an absurd extravagance to open the poll for 12 hours in a country village where perhaps there might not be more than 100 voters on the Register. The object would be amply secured by having the poll open during the dinner hour and in the evening. Some hon. Members expressed the hope that the time would come soon when there would be a School Board in every rural parish. He hoped that time might never arrive; but if they wished to make School Boards more unpopular than they were, let them add to the expense by insisting on the absurd proposal to have the poll open for 12 hours, however small the number of voters.

POST OFFICES AT RAILWAY STATIONS.

OBSERVATIONS.

MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven), who had given Notice that he would call attention to the defective arrangements of the General Post Office at Railway Stations, and move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, it is expedient that additional facilities should be afforded to the public for posting letters at the stations of the Railway Companies in Great Britain and Ireland,"

said, he hoped the hon. Gentleman who in that House represented the Post Office would be able to assure them that the same facilities for the posting of letters at railway stations should be given in this country as existed generally in Continental countries.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.) said, the question of providing additional facilities at railway stations was carefully considered so recently as three years ago, and he found from inquiries then made that upwards of 380 letter boxes were put up at various stations throughout the United Kingdom. The matter, however, was receiving the attention of the Postmaster General——

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present,

House adjourned at Seven o'clock
till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 10*th May*, 1886.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*Second Reading* — Burial Grounds (Scotland) Act (1855) Amendment * (78); Metropolitan Police Stations (87).

Royal Assent—Cape Race Lighthouse [49 *Vict.* c. 13]; Marriages (Hours of Solemnization) [49 *Vict.* c. 14]; Sporting Lands Rating (Scotland) [49 *Vict.* c. 15]; Lunacy (Vacating of Seats) [49 *Vict.* c. 16]; Poor Relief (Ireland) [49 *Vict.* c. 17].

SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE—GREECE—BLOCKADE OF THE GREEK COAST.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Earl of ROSEBERY): My Lords, I desire to lay upon your Lordships' Table a Circular Despatch recapitulating the action of Her Majesty's Government with regard to Greece, which I have addressed to Her Majesty's Representatives abroad, and copies of the two Collective Notes to the Greek Government, and the replies to those Notes, as well as to the notice of blockade which was presented to the Greek Government on Saturday. The first of these Collective Notes was presented on April 26. It demanded that the Greek Army should be placed on a peace footing with the least possible delay, and that assurances should be given to the Representatives of the Powers in the course of a week from the date of the presentation of the Note that orders had been given accordingly. In reply to that Note the Greek Prime Minister sent an answer which will also be laid before your Lordships' House, in which he refers to some communication which had taken place between himself and the French Minister at Athens. That communication, however, your Lordships will see, when you have it in your hands, did not offer any guarantee for that immediate disarmament which we could offer Turkey, and induce Turkey to disarm in her turn. During the week that followed no further communication was received from M. Delyannis. On Monday evening the delay proposed by the Powers expired. It was, however, the desire of the Powers to show all possible consideration towards the Greek nation, and Wednesday being the King's *fête* day, their final answer to M. Delyannis's reply was not declared till Thursday morning, saying that the reply was wholly unsatisfactory, unless supplemented by further declarations. The communication from M. Delyannis was to the effect that he had no further explanations to offer. On Friday morning the Representatives of Germany, Austria, Italy, and Great Britain left Athens, leaving their Legations in charge of the Secretaries. The Russian Minister could not be withdrawn, as he was not at Athens at the time. On Saturday the notice of the blockade was presented, and a blockade as against Greek ships of all kinds is at this moment in existence along the East Coast of Greece and the Gulf of Corinth. That is a bare record of facts; but before I sit down I will ask the indulgence of the House while I make one or two further remarks as to the sufficiency of M. Delyannis's reply to the communication of the Great Powers. Your Lordships will be able to form your own judgment; but that judgment will be materially assisted by the speeches and Circulars of the Greek Prime Minister since he made those specific declarations. Only yesterday he made a speech announcing that he and his Government would never sign a decree of disarmament—a speech which absolutely justifies the contention of Her Majesty's Government and of the other Powers, that while he had announced his intention not to attack Turkey, he had offered no guarantee that the menacing attitude of the Greek Army and the consequent strain both on that country and on Turkey might not be indefinitely prolonged. Moreover, the Greek and the Turkish Armies would have been left face to face with the constant probability of provocation and conflict. That state of things would have been the very danger to the peace of Europe which it has been the endeavour of the Powers by their action to avoid. In the next place, I have to point out that the interests of Great Britain in this matter are various and important. In the first place, there is the great interest which is always a paramount interest in the policy of this country—the maintenance of peace. In the next place, we have to remember the vast importance of upholding the decision of Europe—that is, of the Great Powers of Europe—in cases in which that decision can be usefully enforced; and, thirdly, we have had the interests of Greece and of Turkey to consider. The interests of Greece are sufficiently obvious. No sane friend of Greece could wish that she should embark in war with one of the great Military Powers of the world, even if she had a good cause to fight for. But, my Lords, that is not her present position. I cannot now take up your time with pointing out how unfortunate is the ground on which the Greek Government meditated this aggressive war. On some future occasion I may hope to have the opportunity of doing so. My Lords, the interest of Turkey in this matter is no less obvious. It is just five years since Turkey, on the strenuous intercession of the Powers, ceded the rich Province of Thessaly to Greece. It is hardly conceivable that the Turkish Government now should do otherwise than resist the proposal for another such cession. But while it is almost bound to resist this aggression the strain upon it is no less severe. The Turkish Government has an Army of over 300,000 men in its European Dominions, largely drawn from the Reserves; and the taking of the Reserves sufficiently indicates to your Lordships how great is the strain to which the agriculture of that country is subjected. I put aside the money required to maintain so vast an Army; but I do not put aside the injury to the peaceful inhabitants of the Turkish Empire—the men of which are torn from sowing and ploughing, and from those agricultural operations on which their subsistence depends. Wide districts have, therefore, the prospect of famine staring them in the face. Her Majesty's Advisers, therefore, have strong grounds to proceed upon in using pressure at this juncture. My Lords, this is probably not the moment to make a long statement, and I will only say one more word. I have alluded to the importance of upholding what is popularly called the European Concert in matters of this kind. On this occasion, the European Concert has been very happily maintained. It is quite true that separate action has been taken by France; but I cannot doubt that that action has been taken with the same desire for a peaceful settlement of this question which is entertained by all the other Powers. As regards the other Powers, Austria, Italy, Germany, and Russia maintain a close and harmonious concert with us. That fact is of great importance; and in view of it I cannot doubt but that, coupled with the independent but parallel action of France, the exertions of the Powers will be crowned with success.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, the noble Earl would naturally not expect me to pass any judgment upon proceedings as to which we are now only imperfectly informed; but I should not like to allow the noble Earl's interesting statement to pass without saying on my own behalf that, as far as I am able to judge, the policy which this country is pursuing is not that of one Party or of one Government, but of all Parties in the State. I believe there never was a Power risking so much with so little prospect of advantage and so slender a ground in point of right as is Greece at the present moment; and I feel sure that if any criticism can be passed on the diplomatic proceedings of the last few months, it is rather that they have tended to delay too long, than that they have unreasonably pressed that disarmament for which the peasantry in both countries are just now longing so ardently. The position of the Turkish Empire is one of cruel embarrassment. It is an embarrassment brought on by no fault of her own. On the contrary, if Turkey had had a free hand in the matter, it is probable that the menacing attitude of Greece would long ago have ceased; and, therefore, I am sure we must all heartily join in wishing that the noble Earl and the Powers conjoined may succeed in bringing about before long the dismissal of those formidable armaments which constitute so serious a threat to the well-being of the Provinces concerned.

Greece, No. 1. (1886)—Collective notes to the Hellenic Government, and of the replies thereto:

Greece (No. 2). 1886—Circular despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives abroad respecting the affairs of Greece:

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

SPAIN — SIGNATURES OF THE COMMERCIAL CONVENTION.—OBSERVATIONS.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Earl of ROSEBERY): My Lords, I have much satisfaction in informing you that the negotiations conducted by Her Majesty's Government since their accession to Office with the Spanish Government through Sir Clare Ford, Her Majesty's Minister at Madrid, have resulted in the signature of a Convention, April 26, which Her Majesty's Government trust will place the commercial relations between Great Britain and Spain on a greatly improved footing. The main provisions of the Instrument are as follows:—Spain grants to British produce and manufactures through all her Dominions complete most favoured nation treatment in all that relates to trade and navigation. Her Majesty's Government, on their part, in addition to the continuance of most favoured nation treatment to Spain, engage to apply to Parliament for the necessary authority to provide that the limit of the lower half of the alcoholic scale of Wine Duties shall extend up to but not exceed 30 degrees of proof spirit. The Spanish Government grants specifically to British trade the benefits of all the stipulations contained in the Treaty of 1882 with France and the Treaty of 1883 with Germany. The tariff provisions of these Treaties will benefit many of the most important British industries. The Convention will remain in force until the year 1892 certain, and is capable of indefinite prolongation. The text of the Convention will be presented in a very few days. The sanction of the Spanish

Cortes, as well as of our own Parliament, is required in order to bring the Convention into effect; but it is hoped that no difficulty will be encountered in obtaining an assent which is so manifestly to the benefit of both countries, and which will doubtless strengthen the cordial relations which now so happily exist between the two Crowns and peoples. I cannot conclude without bearing witness to the ability which has been shown by Sir Clare Ford in the conduct of these negotiations; and I may add that his task has been considerably lightened by the goodwill of Senor Moret, the Spanish Minister of State, who, while upholding the commercial interests of his own country, has, as far as possible, met the wishes of Her Majesty's Government with fairness and consideration.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES OF THIS HOUSE.—RESOLUTION.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Earl GRANVILLE), in rising to move—

> "That the Earl of Morley be appointed to take the Chair in all Committees of this House for the remainder of this Session; that the Earl of Morley do take the Chair in all Committees of the Whole House unless where it shall have been otherwise directed by the House; that the Earl of Morley do also take the Chair in all Committees upon Private Bills and other matters, unless where it shall have been otherwise directed by the House,"

said, that the post of Chairman of Committees in its present conditions had only been held by three Peers, and that the Earl of Redesdale had succeeded the Earl of Shaftesbury, no opposition being offered to his appointment owing, probably, to the fact that he had for a considerable period performed the duties of Chairman in the absence of the Earl of Shaftesbury. The noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury) had allowed him to communicate with him on the subject; but although they had agreed that this was not a Party question, they could not agree upon the Peer who combined, in the greatest degree, probable fitness for the Office and general acceptability by the House. It appeared to him (Earl Granville) that the Earl of Morley would meet these two conditions; and he had been encouraged in this by the favourable opinions held, not only by Peers on the Ministerial side of the House, but by some Peers on the Opposition side. Their Lordships were aware how far the promise of the Earl of Morley's great distinction at Oxford had been fulfilled in that House during the 21 years he had had a seat. Their Lordships might have remarked the way in which he took part in the debates of the House; the authority with which he conducted the business of the Public Department which he represented, and the faculty he had of getting hold of the favourable attention of the House whenever he addressed it. Many of their Lordships were better acquainted than he was with the part which the Earl of Morley had taken in the Private Business of the House during the 18 years he had been a Member of Standing Committees of the House. Good service of a most useful character in that way brought very little credit to the person who did it, as he was very little known to the public, but gave a fair promise of success in the Office for which he was now nominated. In great Departments of State he (Earl Granville) was better acquainted than many of their Lordships, and he was sure he would be confirmed by his present and late Colleagues that the Earl of Morley had obtained an especially high character in various Departments of the State for industry. His ability, his judgment, his tact, and his celerity, combined with accuracy, was a thing in conducting business not altogether to be despised at the present day. The Earl of Morley was 43 years old, which was some eight years beyond the physical, but not much, some of them hoped, beyond the intellectual prime of a man's life. He had never been connected with any of the great Companies which came so often before their Lordships' House, and, in fact, he had never been connected with any Companies at all. He was perfectly well aware, though he regretted to say it, that he did not at this moment possess the Party influence in that House which he might have possessed last year; and he was also aware that late events had very much diminished any claim that the Earl of Morley might have had upon him when exercising that Party influence; but he (Earl Granville) could assure their Lordships that last year just as much as now he would have been anxious that this question should not be treated as a Party question. He was glad to see so large an attendance of Peers, because he believed that they would vote according to their own personal views as to what Peer was the most likely to perform the Business of the House in a manner satisfactory to their Lordships, and likely to maintain the high reputation they enjoyed with the public as to the conduct of their Private Business.

Moved, "That the Earl of Morley be appointed to take the Chair in all Committees of this House for the remainder of this Session."—(*The Earl Granville.*)

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, in moving, as an Amendment—

> "To leave out the name of the Earl of Morley and to insert that of the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos,"

said, that in moving this Amendment he thought he would best perform his duty if he did not attempt to controvert any part of the eulogy passed upon the Earl of Morley by the noble Earl opposite. He had a high opinion of the Earl of Morley, and he hoped that nothing he should do would be held inconsistent with that opinion. This was to be looked upon as a friendly conflict; and if, in the end, they did not succeed in obtaining the verdict of the House, they should with the greatest heartiness support the Chairman whom the House should select. The noble Earl opposite had alluded to the fact that the Earl of Morley had never been connected with Public Companies; but if the fact of having at one period of his life been connected with a great Company like the London and North-Western Railway Company was to strike a man as permanently incapable of taking an impartial part in the proceedings of their Lordships' House, he admitted that he was out of court at once. He would not believe that. On the contrary, he thought a connection with the very difficult circumstances which constituted the railway business of this country was a preparation and a qualification for taking a judicial part in the discharge of the Private Business of this House, and was not to be held as a disqualification. On what principle were the Judges appointed in this country? Their principle had always been that the best advocates made the best Judges, and that the knowledge they acquired in the performance of their duties as advocates was an invaluable qualification for the performance of their duties on the Judicial Bench. He himself had been a Railway Director; and he was bound to say that he was very much struck with the extent to which the experience obtained inside a Railway Company's offices enabled one to consider, and consider with knowledge of details, all the conflicting business which our railway legislation brought before Parliamentary Committees; and he should be sorry—not merely because it might disqualify himself, but on public grounds—if their Lordships did not recognize that the fact that a man had taken part in these great industrial enterprizes was a qualification for a Chairman of Committees in that House, the decisions of which so largely affected enterprizes of this character. The qualifications of the Duke of Buckingham were, however, not confined to his services in connection with any Railway Company. He had held subordinate Office on more than one occasion. Twenty years ago he was President of the Council, and shortly after that he was appointed Secretary of State for the Colonies, and both these were Offices in which a large acquaintance was acquired with the commercial and industrial business of this country. After that he was for five years Governor of the Province of Madras; and any of their Lordships acquainted with Indian Business must know how largely the duties of any Indian Ruler were concerned with works of public improvement, which constituted a considerable portion of the Private Business brought before the Chairman of Committees of that House. The Duke of Buckingham had, in addition, exercised—and he believed with great general satisfaction—the duties of Chairman of Quarter Sessions in his own county. The great qualification that was wanted in a Chairman of Committees was that he should have been accustomed to preside and rule, so as to be able to deal with a class of persons who were very able, but not very easily brought under control. For this a man of strong, and he might say of stern, character was required. Parliamentary agents were probably the most difficult people to have one's way with that could possibly be found. They would give way to persons of authority and firmness and resolution, and who knew their business; but with a person who did not sufficiently know his business, who had not the authority attaching to high employment, and whose amiability of character was in a preponderating degree a portion of his temperament, the Parliamentary agents would have their way, and by him they would not be properly governed. In appointing to this post, they should be considerate, not only for the fact that they wanted a man who had experience and resolution of character, but a man who was known by the public to have qualities which fitted him for the post, because his decisions would often be exposed to criticism and comment; and it was of great importance that sufficient authority should be attached to the decisions which he gave, and that he should be a person of that age and experience and past service which imposed his judgment and his opinion upon others. While paying all respect to the candidate of the noble Earl opposite, it appeared to him that the Duke of Buckingham would be the fittest person to succeed the great Chairman of Committees, whose loss they all deplored.

Amendment *moved*, to leave out ("Earl of Morley,") and insert ("Duke of Buckingham and Chandos.") — (*The Marquess of Salisbury.*)

Earl GRANVILLE said, he should certainly be prepared to loyally support the Chairman of Committees, whoever he might be; but he thought some of the noble Marquess's arguments were not quite conclusive. The noble Marquess was surprised at the assertion that non-connection with Companies coming before the House was an advantage in their Chairman of Committees. But, *ceteris paribus*, he certainly did not think it an advantage that the Chairman should be entirely independent of Companies. No one would for a moment believe that a man of high character, such as the Duke of Buckingham, would be too favourable to the London and North-Western Railway Company because of his connection with it—that connection would rather have the reverse effect; but still several of the best men of business in the House considered that their present or recent connection with railways was an absolute disqualification. The noble Marquess had referred to the fact that the Duke of Buckingham was Chairman of Quarter Sessions, but so was the Earl of Morley. The noble Marquess also detailed to the House the high Offices that the Duke of Buckingham had held, and the great experience he had had in India. These were arguments which would have been more applicable in favour of including the noble Duke in the noble Marquess's late Cabinet than in support of a proposal to put him into an entirely new line of business, which, owing to his being occupied in another way, the noble Duke had entirely neglected in that House.

On Question, That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Motion? Their Lordships *divided*:—Contents 103; Not-Contents 122: Majority 19.

Resolved in the *negative*.

Then it was *moved* to *resolve*,

"That the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos be appointed to take the Chair in all Committees of this House for the remainder of this Session:

"That the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos do take the Chair in all Committees of the Whole House unless where it shall have been otherwise directed by the House:

"That the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos do also take the Chair in all Committees upon Private Bills and other matters, unless where it shall have been otherwise directed by the House."

Agreed to; and *resolved* accordingly.

REPRESENTATIVE PEERS FOR IRELAND.

Ordered, That there be laid before this House a nominal return, in tabular form, of the Lords Temporal at present elected to serve in Parliament for Ireland, arranged according to date of election, with the number of years of service, and showing the naval, military, or civil rank in public service (if any) of each Peer, and also the naval or military commands or civil public offices he may have held.—(*The Earl of Belmore.*)

NAVY—DISCIPLINE, &c.—IRREGULARITIES IN BARRACKS.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

Viscount MIDLETON, in rising to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether his attention has been called to the evidence taken at the inquest held upon the death of an officer in the Royal Marine Barracks at Chatham; and whether any and what steps have been taken to prevent the irregularities disclosed by the evidence? said, he thought that their Lordships would remember the case in question, which had happened a short time ago, in which a young officer had committed suicide in the Marine Barracks at Chatham. An inquest had been held on the body, and it had transpired at the inquest that a young woman of improper character had been present in the officer's quarters at the time. The Queen's Regulations were very strict on this subject, Commanding Officers being charged to maintain order and prevent the admission of disorderly characters into barracks. The instance in question was, unfortunately, not a solitary one, a case having been brought to notice at Aldershot some time ago; and, on inquiry, he found that such occurrences were not infrequent. It was said that there was great difficulty in stopping the practice. The example was a very bad one for the soldiers; and he could not help thinking that there were ways and means of putting a stop to these objectionable practices.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (The Marquess of RIPON) said, that he was not surprised that the noble Viscount had called attention to the unhappy circumstances which had been made public in the course of the inquest held at Chatham the other day. He could assure him that he entirely sympathized with the opinions he had expressed with regard to the importance of putting a stop to such practices as he had alluded to. The existence, however, of these practices was not the fault of the Board of Admiralty, a definite and distinct Order having been issued on the subject, dated the 4th of June, 1869, to the effect that Commanding Officers should strictly prohibit the admission of improper characters at any time and under any circumstances. As soon as the attention of the Board of Admiralty was called to the case full inquiry was ordered to be made into the whole circumstances; but it was found that unfortunately the order had fallen into desuetude, and the present Commanding Officer at Chatham, who had only been there for a year, was quite unaware of its existence. Since the occurrence at Chatham the attention of all Commanding Officers had been directed to the Order, and they had been instructed to enforce it with the greatest strictness. The matter was still under the consideration of the Admiralty, with a view of seeing if anything further could be done to prevent such scandals in future.

METROPOLITAN POLICE STATIONS BILL.—(No. 87.)

(*The Lord Thurlow.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE PAYMASTER GENERAL (Lord THURLOW), in moving that the Bill be read a second time, explained that it was to enable a sum of £200,000 to be raised upon the security of the rates of the Metropolis for the purpose of erecting new central police offices, new police stations where required, and also for enabling the authorities to improve the existing stations.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Thurlow.*)

Motion *agreed to*; Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House *To-morrow.*

NAVY—THE ESTIMATES, 1886-7.

RESOLUTION.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH, in moving—

> "That the Navy Estimates for the present year be laid on the Table of this House,"

complained of the manner in which his Motion had been treated by the Government when he brought it forward a short time ago, and contended that inasmuch as naval discussions frequently arose in this House, it was essential that the Estimates should be laid on the Table.

Moved, "That the Navy Estimates for this year be laid on the Table of this House."—(*The Viscount Sidmouth.*)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (The Marquess of RIPON) said, it had not been the practice hitherto to lay these Estimates before their Lordships, and he thought it was very undesirable that either the Army or the Navy Estimates should be so introduced. At the same time, he should be most happy at all times to answer any Question which related to the Navy which the noble Viscount or any other Member of their Lordships' House might address to him.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY said, he did not agree that the present state of things was perfectly satisfactory. The Navy Estimates gave a picture of policy, and one on which they could pass an opinion; and it appeared to him that the fact of the First Lord of the Admiralty having a seat in that House necessarily meant that he should defend himself if he was attacked there. Two years ago he made some observations on the subject of the Navy. The noble Earl then at the head of the Admiralty (the Earl of Northbrook) thought those observations were unfounded, and took him to task for introducing the subject in that House. The discussion of the question could only be adequately carried on by their Lordships when they had the Estimates before them, and it was most inconvenient that their Lordships should have to run to the Library for the information they required for the purpose. On the occasion to which he referred, moreover, it was the noble Earl (the Earl of Northbrook) himself who brought the subject forward, and gave them a long dissertation on ships and torpedoes. It was not a question of encroachment on the rights of the other House; and he would suggest that it would be consistent with precedent if, on the Motion of any noble Lord, a message might be sent to the House of Commons asking them that the Estimates might be presented to their Lordships. That course, he thought, could not cause any jealousy as to privilege.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (The Earl of KIMBERLEY) said, he thought the suggestion of the noble Marquess would go rather a long way, because it would apply equally to other Estimates besides those of the Navy. There was the Education Department, and the Vice President was in the other House. Would they have the Education Estimate presented in that House because the Lord President sat there? Then there was the Board of Works. It would hardly be contended that the Estimates of that Department should be laid before their Lordships. It could not be made dependent on the accident that the Representative of a Department was in that House. It must be a general practice or not at all.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH withdrew the Motion on the understanding that the noble Marquess would consent to consider the subject.

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND AND GORDON did not like it to go forth to the public that his noble Friend the Lord President (Earl Spencer) was subordinate to any official in the Education Department.

THE MARQUESS OF RIPON promised to communicate with the Leader of the House (Earl Granville), and to consider the suggestion of the noble Marquess.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY said, he did not wish that it should be always done; but that it should be competent for any Member of that House to move for these Estimates.

Motion (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

House adjourned at a quarter before Six o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 10*th May,* 1886.

MINUTES.] — SELECT COMMITTEE — Town Holdings, Mr. Macartney *disch.;* Mr. Haslett *added.*

SUPPLY — *considered in Committee — Resolution* [May 3] *reported; debate resumed.*

PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*)—*Second Reading* — Colwyn Bay Water.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*Second Reading*—Government of Ireland [181] [*First Night*], *debate adjourned;* Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) [194], *debate adjourned.*

Committee — Customs and Inland Revenue [190]—R.P.; Terms of Removal (Scotland) [187]—R.P.

Committee—Report—National Debt * [191].

Third Reading — Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2) [200], and *passed.*

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS — *Ordered* — *First Reading*—Tramways (No. 2) (Bradford Corporation Tramways, &c.) * [208].

Second Reading—Tramways (No. 1) * [195].

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners;—

The House went;—and being returned;—

Mr. Speaker *reported* the *Royal Assent to* several Bills.

QUESTIONS.

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART—WATER COLOUR DRAWINGS AT SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM.

MR. AGNEW (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, If he will appoint a Commission to make inquiry into the alleged deterioration of water colour drawings at the South Kensington Museum; to further consider and report upon the best method of exhibiting such works to the public; the best means to secure their conservation; and also upon the action (if any) of the electric light on water colour pigments?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir LYON PLAYFAIR) (Leeds, S.): We have already made arrangements to enable Dr. Russell, F.R.S., and Captain Abney, F.R.S., to carry out an exhaustive series of experiments on the action of sunlight, diffused light, and electric light on the various pigments used by painters in water colours. When these are complete, we shall be in a position to determine whether a more extended inquiry is necessary, and a scientific basis will be furnished for such further inquiry. At the same time, I may inform the hon. Member (Mr. Agnew) that from the statements made by the officers who have had charge of the Water Colour Collections at South Kensington, I have reason to believe that the works there exhibited have undergone little, if any, change since they were received. The skylights are made of rolled glass, so as to break and diffuse the light, and have blinds under the glass. Every care is, and will be, taken of the pictures, compatible with that exhibition to, and use by, the public for which they were acquired, whether by purchase or gift. The conditions of bequest frequently enjoin that the water colours shall be exhibited as freely and openly to the public as the oil paintings.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND)—MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ROSS KEEN, ROSS-SHIRE, AND ITS TEACHERS.

DR. R. MACDONALD (Ross and Cromarty) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether he is aware that, in the Memorandum of Agreement between the School Board of Ross Keen, Ross-shire, and its teachers, there are the following clauses:—

> "In addition to the fixed salary, the Board agree to allow the teacher, subject as aftermentioned, the Government grant earned by the school during this engagement, ... and the school fees from time to time, as he collects the same himself, which he is hereby taken bound by the Board to do, the School Board giving him assistance to recover when in their opinion necessary, the School Board and their successors in office under no circumstances being liable to make good arrears of fees not collected by the teacher. The emoluments allowed to the teacher by the preceding article are subject to deductions by the Board of the salaries of assistant and pupil teachers, and others forming the staff of said school;"

whether, in violation of the above, the said School Board have retained part of the Government grant of last year, and refused to pay it to the teachers in full; whether he is aware that the clerk of the said Board, on the 16th of February 1886, wrote a letter to the teachers, in which the following paragraph appears:—

> "It was also decided yesterday that the teachers be paid Government grant as formerly, and that the extra grant under the Minute of Council of 30th April last be retained by the Board;"

whether the said Memorandum of Agreement is in conformity with the Education Act, in respect that the School Boards contracts itself out of any interest in the financial fortunes of the schools; it saddles the teachers with the duties of treasurer to the Board by making them the collectors of the fees; the teachers are bound to sustain the loss of all school fees not collected by them, while they have no locus standi to sue the defaulters; whether, in the event of any of these teachers suing the said Board for what they consider in justice to be part of their stipulated remuneration, being withheld, it is competent for the majority of the Board to dismiss him arbitrarily and without cause shown; whether the said Board in 1881 dismissed Mr. William Smith, head master of the Invergordon public school, because he would not sign the Memorandum here referred to, by which his salary was to be lowered; whether notice of motion has been given by a member of the Board to further diminish the incomes of the teachers, contrary to the Memorandum of Agreement, and which motion, if carried, the teachers will be bound by on pain of dismissal; and, whether the Department means to take any steps to make the position of teachers of elementary schools in Scotland more secure and independent, by preventing School Boards from dismissing their teachers unless the causes for so doing are satisfactory to the Department?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): Such an agreement as that referred to in the Question is not considered satisfactory by the Department, either in respect of recognizing the responsibility of the school board, or as likely to promote the efficiency of a school, and they propose to communicate with the school board as to its terms. But such agreements rest with school boards, and teachers are not in ordinary course submitted to the Department, and must be interpreted like any other legal contract, as to the force of which their Lordships have no power to lay down any authoritative opinion. The question of the tenure of their office by teachers was fully considered by Parliament in 1882, when the Public School Teachers (Scotland) Act, 1882, was passed, and the Department has no present intention of proposing further legislation on the subject.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—LONGFORD ASSIZES—ASSAULT ON JAMES AND CHRISTOPHER NEWMAN.

MR. JUSTIN M'CARTHY (Longford, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to a case tried before Mr. Justice Murphy, at the Longford Spring Assizes, in which four men named Farrell, and seven other men, were convicted of a serious assault on James and Christopher Newman, on Sunday the 11th of October last; whether the evidence showed that the assault was premeditated, and whether Dr. Atkinson, who attended the injured men for ten days, stated in court that for two days he considered their lives were in danger; whether the Judge, in passing sentence, commented severely on the deliberate and premeditated nature of the attack, and on the "terrible havoc" made by the prisoners "in the short time availed of in the absence of the Police;" whether the prisoners were sentenced to terms of imprisonment varying from six months to six weeks; whether, in addition to John Farrell, released on his own recognizance on account of alleged ill-health, two others of the prisoners have since been released long before the expiration of their sentences; and, whether he can explain the reason for the release of those men before the time of their sentences had expired?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, that there was undoubtedly a very serious assault committed on the occasion referred to in the Question; but it was equally certain that the defendants acted under circumstances of extreme provocation. The learned Judge who tried the case thought it his duty, in the interests of justice, to make the observations, and to pass the sentence he did. A Memorial was presented subsequently to the Lord Lieutenant on behalf of the prisoners; the case was reviewed, and a reduction of the sentence was ordered. That had been done with the sanction of the learned Judge. It was right to add that it appeared that the prisoners were men of previous good character and were recommended to mercy by the jury who tried the case.

MR. JUSTIN M'CARTHY: Can the right hon. Gentleman inform the House who it was signed the Memorial?

MR. JOHN MORLEY replied that he could not say.

FOREIGN OFFICE — CONSULAR AND COMMERCIAL REPORTS.

MR. J. G. HUBBARD (London) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether, seeing the mass of interesting and valuable information furnished by Her Majesty's officers abroad, hitherto hidden in Blue Books published in uniform covers stamped "Commercial," but giving no other clue to their contents, he will require these Consular Reports to be adapted for use and reference by being issued in covers exhibiting the names of the Countries treated of, and giving the dates of the preceding Reports upon the same Countries respectively?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): The whole question of the form of publication of commercial and other Reports from Her Majesty's Representatives abroad is at present engaging the attention of the Secretary of State. The suggestion of my right hon. Friend seems a valuable one, and shall receive the fullest consideration; but, pending the decision to be taken in the various questions involved, I trust he will not expect a more explicit declaration.

EGYPT—SIR H. DRUMMOND WOLFF'S MISSION.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether any provision has been made in the

Estimates of the present financial year for the cost of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission to Egypt; and, if not, from what funds he and his staff are paid; whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government further to keep two diplomatic agents in Egypt, at £5,000 per annum each, besides staff and expenses; and, what are the functions of the two agents respectively, especially whether Sir Henry Drummond Wolff is confined to the Military and frontier questions, or whether he is inquiring into the Civil Administration as well?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): A sum of £11,900 has been inserted in the Diplomatic Estimates for "Unforeseen Missions and Expenses;" and the expenses of Sir H. Drummond Wolff's Mission will be defrayed from this Vote. It is not intended that Sir H. Drummond Wolff should remain in Egypt after he has completed his Reports and terminated his negotiations with the Turkish High Commissioner. The division of business between the Special Mission and the Permanent Agency was left to the discretion of Sir H. Drummond Wolff in consultation with Sir Evelyn Baring. In practice, while each has been in the habit of consulting the other, Sir Evelyn Baring deals with the greater part of the usual current business of the Agency, while Sir H. Drummond Wolff's attention has been principally directed to the question of the Soudan, of Military and Civil Re-organization, and certain special questions of internal administration.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1854—THE "CREOLE."

COLONEL HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether he has seen an article in *Fair Play* of the 3rd April, headed *Another Board of Trade Scandal;* whether the statement contained in that article is true, to the effect that the cargo steamship *Creole* recently proceeded to sea with passengers in excess of the number allowed by the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854; whether young children and other passengers signed on the ship's articles as forming part of the crew; and, whether the Board of Trade is cognizant of this evasion of the Law; and, if not cognizant, whether he will cause inquiries to be made as to the serious allegations against his Department in the article referred to?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside): Since the hon. Gentleman's Question appeared on the Notice Paper, I have read the article referred to. The Board of Trade, having reason to believe that the master of the steamship *Creole* had been guilty of an irregularity in obtaining the clearance of his vessel, had taken action in the matter a month before the article appeared, and on March 11 gave notice to the owners that, in all probability, it would form the subject of a prosecution. The matter now waits the master's return to this country.

SCOTLAND—LOCAL TAXATION—THE BLUE BOOK FOR 1884.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire) asked the Lord Advocate, The cause of the delay in issuing the Blue Book of Local Taxation in Scotland for 1884?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I am informed by the Home Office, by which Department the Returns for 1883-4 will be presented, that, in consequence of the difficulty of obtaining the necessary information from the respective county road clerks to enable a rectification to be made of the several statements given in the Returns relative to the valuation and allocation of the various debts made under the Roads and Bridges (Scotland) Act, 1871, the preparation of the abstract was necessarily delayed; but all the required information has now been received, and the statements amended in accordance therewith. The abstract will be completed and placed in the printer's hands in a few days.

ARMY (INDIA)—INSPECTORS OF ARMY SCHOOLS.

VISCOUNT LEWISHAM (Lewisham) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Why increased rates of pay and Indian allowances have not been sanctioned for Inspectors of Army Schools serving in India, on completion of ten years' commissioned service, in conformity with the Royal Warrant; whether promotion to this grade has been provided for in the Indian Army Circulars of 1882; whether any scale of pay has been issued; whether increased rates of pay, &c. have been authorised for issue to all other officers on completion of ten years' service; whether he will state, if this be so, why Inspectors of Army Schools are treated in this exceptional manner; and, if he will arrange for suitably increased rates of pay and Indian allowances to be issued to Major W. Robinson, Retired List, who served in India as Inspector, after ten years' service as Sub-Inspector, without any increase of pay, the officials not having sanctioned the application of the Royal Warrant to India, by which he suffered very material loss, as he was serving in India on less pay and allowance than Inspectors junior to him were then actually receiving at Home stations?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. STAFFORD HOWARD): My Predecessor in Office (Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth), replying to a Question of the noble Viscount on March 11, explained the position of Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors of Army Schools under the Royal Warrant of 1881. To the explanation then given, I think I need only add that in 1884 a new scale of pay was adopted for these officers, by which they received a consolidated salary, beginning at Rs.270 monthly, and increasing to Rs.300, Rs.350, and Rs.400, after five, 10, and 15 years' service. In accordance with the usual practice, these rates came into force, without retrospective effect, from the date of the Order sanctioning them. The Secretary of State in Council does not propose to recommend the Government of India to make any further alterations affecting the scale of pay, or to exempt Major Robinson from the operation of the Rules of the Service.

POST OFFICE—INSUFFICIENTLY ADDRESSED TELEGRAMS.

MR. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the refusal of the Postal authorities in Liverpool to deliver a telegram sent from Oswestry on the 16th April, addressed "Pierce and Hartley, Solicitors, Liverpool," and one sent on the 20th April, at 10.37 a.m. from Coniston, addressed "Thornely and Cameron, Solicitors, Liverpool," on the ground that "the delivery could not have been effected without reference to a Directory," complies with the latest instructions of the Postmaster General in reference to the delivery of telegrams?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): In reply to the hon. Member I have to state that, although it is open to doubt whether, in the cases referred to, the senders had done their best to give a sufficient address, the Postmaster General is inclined to think that the addresses given were sufficient to insure the delivery of the telegrams, and renewed instructions on the subject have been given.

SCOTLAND—DISTRESS IN KINTRA, ROSS OF MULL, ARGYLLSHIRE.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll) asked the Lord Advocate, If his attention has been called to the distressed condition of the population of the village of Kintra, in the Ross of Mull, Argyllshire; and, if he would cause inquiry to be made into their circumstances and as to their urgent need of assistance to enable them to obtain seed potatoes?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.), in reply, said, that until the Question was put on the Paper he had heard nothing of the matter. He had communicated with the Board of Supervision, and they had no information. Inquiry would, however, be made.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—POLICE SUPERANNUATION BILLS.

SIR HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, When he proposes to introduce his promised Bill dealing with Police Superannuation?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I cannot name the precise day; but I have given Notice to introduce two Bills—the General Compensation for Damages Bill and the Mines Bill; and the Quarries Bill will be introduced in a few days. The Police Superannuation Bill will follow these without delay.

AFGHAN DEMARCATION COMMISSION.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether it is the fact, as stated in repeated telegrams in *The Times* newspaper from Meshed and Maruchak, that the work of the Afghan Demarcation

Commission is practically at a standstill, in consequence of the Russian Commissioner having unexpectedly advanced claims which the British Commisioner will not entertain?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): The proceedings of the Commission were suspended a short time ago, as the Russian Commissioner stated that he was unable to proceed until he had received instructions on certain points which he had referred to his Government. He has now, however, received these instructions, and the Commission has resumed operations.

SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE—GREECE—BLOCKADE OF THE GREEK COAST.

Mr. BOURKE (Lyme Regis): I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, When the Papers promised today in "another place" with regard to Greece will be in the hands of Members of this House? I also wish to ask, What part of the Greek coast is blockaded; whether all the Powers have joined in the blockade; and whether a state of war might not be said to exist between Greece and the Powers in consequence of this blockade; and if only a portion of Greece is blockaded, on what principle did it affect that portion of Greece?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): I have this afternoon laid on the Table of the House the Papers to which the Questions of the right hon. Gentleman refer—namely, the Collective Notes and the answers of the Greek Government thereto, together with copies of the notices of blockade. I hope they may be in the hands of Members in a very few days. As regards the blockade, it applies to the whole of the East Coast of Greece. It begins at Cape Malea and extends to Cape Colonna, and thence to the frontier between Turkey and Greece on the Northern border of Thessaly. It also covers, on the West Coast, the entrance to the Gulf of Corinth. All the Powers have joined in the notice of blockade except France, and no state of war exists between this country or any of the Powers and Greece. No question of war arises, as the blockade is what is known in International Law as a pacific blockade. [*Laughter.*] Those hon. Members who laugh can hardly remember that a blockade of this kind was proclaimed against Greece in 1850, and that it did not affect neutrals at all. So the present blockade affects Greek ships only, and does not imply capture, but simply the detention of vessels seeking to break the blockade. It, in fact, prevents commercial intercourse between Greek and other ports by means of ships flying the Greek flag.

Mr. JOSEPH COWEN (Newcastle-on-Tyne) asked where the Greek Fleet was, and whether it was included in this limited blockade?

Mr. BRYCE: Perhaps the hon. Member will give Notice of the Question.

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—BURGH POLICE AND HEALTH (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.) appealed to the Lord Advocate not to proceed with the second reading of this Bill to-night, as it contained over 500 clauses, and had only been issued this morning, and in that case to issue before the second reading was taken a Memorandum similar to that issued in 1884, showing the points in which the Bill differed from those previously brought forward.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.) said, he did not anticipate that there could be any possible objection to taking the stage of second reading as at present arranged, as the Bill had been read a second time in the House of Commons before, and had been referred to a Select Committee, by whom it had been carefully considered. It had come down this year from the House of Lords, where it had been twice carefully considered; and he would put it to his hon. Friends whether they might not take the second reading to-night, and give some time before the Committee stage? [*Cries of* "No, no!"]

SPAIN—SIGNATURES OF THE COMMERCIAL CONVENTION.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): I have much satisfaction in informing the House that the negotiations conducted by Her Majesty's Government, since their accession to Office, with the Spanish Government, through Sir Clare Ford, Her Majesty's Minister at Madrid, have resulted in the signature of a Convention which Her Majesty's Government trust will place the commercial relations between Great Britain and Spain on a greatly improved footing. The main provisions of the Instrument are as follows:—Spain grants to British produce and manufactures, through all her Dominions, complete most favoured nation treatment in all that relates to trade and navigation. Her Majesty's Government, on their part, in addition to the continuance to Spain and her Colonies of most favoured nation treatment, engage to apply to Parliament for the necessary authority to provide that the limit of the lower half of the alcoholic scale of Wine Duties shall extend up to, but not exceed, 30 degrees of proof spirit. The Spanish Government grants specifically to British trade the benefits of all the stipulations contained in the Treaty of 1882 with France, and the Treaty of 1883 with Germany. Her Majesty's Government trust that the tariff provisions of these Treaties will largely benefit some of the most important British industries, and that the disabilities under which British trade with Spain has hitherto laboured will now be removed. The Convention will remain in force until the year 1892 certain, and is capable of indefinite prolongation. Its text will be presented to the House in a very few days. The sanction of the Spanish Cortes, as well as of our own Parliament, is required in order to bring the Convention into effect. But it is hoped that no difficulty will be encountered in obtaining an assent which is manifestly to the benefit of both countries, and which will doubtless strengthen the cordial relations which now happily exist between the two Crowns and peoples. I cannot conclude without bearing witness to the ability which has been shown by Sir Clare Ford in the conduct of these negotiations; and I may add that his task has been considerably lightened by the good will of Senor Moret, the Spanish Minister of State, who, while upholding the commercial interests of his own country, has, as far as possible, met the wishes of Her Majesty's Government with fairness and consideration.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): Will the advantages in respect to the alcoholic strength of wines be extended to the British Colonies?

MR. BRYCE: Certainly.

MR. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk): Does the Convention extend to British ships going to Spanish Colonies the same privileges as are extended to ships of other nations?

MR. BRYCE: I certainly understand that point to be covered by the Convention. The words are—"Complete most favoured nation treatment" in all that relates to trade and navigation.

SIR HENRY ROSCOE (Manchester, S.): When will the Papers in regard to this most important subject be laid on the Table?

MR. BRYCE: I hope to lay the text of the Convention on the Table of the House to-morrow, and I hope the print of it will be in the hands of hon. Members in a short time.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—DEBATE ON THE "GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND."

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he proposes to continue the debate on the Government of Ireland Bill from day to day, or if he proposes to adopt any other arrangement?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): The right hon. Gentleman on a former day spoke of usage as being in favour of an immediate application to the House of Commons for power to continue this debate from day to day. I have taken the trouble to look back to the two most important legislative measures of the last Parliament—the Land Act of 1881 and the Franchise Act of 1884. The second reading debate on the former measure was carried on for eight nights, from Monday to Thursday, without any continuance from day to day, although it was undoubtedly a first-class measure of urgency and importance. The Franchise Act of 1884 was in a like manner continued for six nights, in the same way from Monday to Thursday. I have certainly, however, an impression that when there is something like obvious necessity or advantage—which we shall learn shortly after the debate opens—and if there is likely to be a great demand on the part of Members to state their opinions, in that case we shall not scruple to make application to continue the debate *de die in diem*.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH explained that his reference to usage was based on earlier precedents—the Reform Act of 1866, the Irish Land Act of 1871, and the Irish Church Act. He thought it had been usual in issues of the greatest moment to continue the debate *de die in diem*.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: If the right hon. Gentleman is quite sure about the precedents he quotes I will at once give way. But my recollection is not to the effect stated by the right hon. Gentleman. I admit that in former times the House was extremely liberal in the concession of continuous debate on matters of first-class importance. The first great Reform Act was taken, one almost might say, every day for months and months together; but the disposition now on the part of private Members has naturally grown up, in the altered state of representation, to press for much more time to present to the House matters on their own responsibility.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.) called attention to the fact that on Tuesday and Friday last the House was counted out at an early hour. Looking, therefore, to the character of the Notices on those days in the current week, he asked whether it would not be, looking to the great importance of the question, a waste of public time if the debate was not continued *de die in diem?* As to the precedent of 1866, he might perhaps say that it was a consecutive discussion, with the exception of one Tuesday, when Sir Fitzroy Kelly, on behalf of the Tory Party, insisted on the House devoting its attention to a discussion on the Malt Tax.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: The importance of the question of the Malt Tax when Liberal Governments were in Office sank into total insignificance when the Conservatives were in Office. I cannot deviate from the clear Notice which was given to the House last Friday, and in accordance with which hon. Gentlemen had been allowed to make their arrangements.

ARMS (IRELAND) BILL.

In reply to Mr. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford),

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne) said, that after the adjournment of the debate that night on the Government of Ireland Bill he proposed to proceed with this Bill.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL.—[BILL 181.]

(*Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Attorney General.*)

SECOND READING. [FIRST NIGHT.]

Order for Second Reading read.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I was the latest of the Members of this House who had an opportunity of addressing the House in the debate on the introduction of this Bill; yet I think no one will be surprised at my desiring to submit some observations in moving the second reading. And this, on the double ground—first of all, because unquestionably the discussion has been carried on since the introduction of the Bill throughout the country with remarkable liveliness and activity; and, secondly, because so many criticisms have turned on an important particular of the Bill with respect to which the Government feel it to be an absolute duty on our part that we should, without any delay whatever, render to the House the advantage of such explanations as, consistently with our public duty, it may be in our power to make.

I am very sorry to say that I am obliged to introduce into this speech—but only I hope to the extent of a very few sentences—a statement of my own personal position in regard to this question, which I refrained from mentioning to the House at the time when I asked for leave to bring in the Bill. But I read speeches which some Gentlemen opposite apparently think it important to make to their constituencies, and which contain statements so entirely erroneous and baseless that, although I do not think it myself to be a subject of great importance and revelancy to the question, yet as they do think it to be so, I am bound to set them right, and to provide them with the means of avoiding similar errors on future occasions. Although it is not a very safe thing for a man who has been for a long time in public life—and sometimes not very safe even for those who have been for a short time time in public life—to assert a negative, still I will venture to assert that I have never in any period of my life declared what is now familiarly known as Home Rule in Ireland to be incompatible with Imperial unity. ["Oh, oh!" *from the Opposition.*] Yes; exactly so. My sight is bad, and I am not going to make personal references; but I dare say the interruption comes from some Member who has been down to his constituents and has made one of those speeches stuffed full of totally untrue and worthless matter.

I will go on to say what is true in this matter. In 1871 the question of Home Rule was an extremely young question. In fact, Irish history on these matters in my time has divided itself into three great periods. The first was the Repeal period under Mr. O'Connell, which began about the time of the Reform Act and lasted until the death of that distinguished man. On that period I am not aware of ever having given an opinion; but that is not the question which I consider is now before us. The second period was that between the death of Mr. O'Connell and the emergence, so to say, of the subject of Home Rule. That was the period in which physical force and organizations with that object were conceived and matured, taking effect under the name generally of what is known as Fenianism. In 1870 or 1871 came up the question of Home Rule. In a speech which I made in Aberdeen at that period I stated the great satisfaction with which I heard and with which I accepted the statements of the proposers of Home Rule, that under that name they contemplated nothing that was at variance with the unity of the Empire.

But while I say this, do not let it be supposed that I have ever regarded the introduction of Home Rule as a small matter, or as entailing a slight responsibility. I admit, on the contrary, that I have regarded it as a subject of the gravest responsibility, and so I still regard it. I have cherished, as long as I was able to cherish, the hope that Parliament might, by passing—by the steady and the continuous passing—of good measures for Ireland, be able to encounter and dispose of the demand for Home Rule in that manner which obviously can alone be satisfactory. In that hope, undoubtedly, I was disappointed. I found that we could not reach that desired point. But two conditions have been always absolute and indispensable with me in regard to Home Rule. In the first place, it was absolutely necessary that it should be shown, by marks at once unequivocal and perfectly Constitutional, to be the desire of the great mass of the population of Ireland; and I do not hesitate to say that that condition has never been absolutely and unequivocally fulfilled, in a manner to make its fulfilment undeniable, until the occasion of the recent Election. It was open for anyone to discuss whether the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell)—acting as he acted in the last Parliament, with some 45 Members—it was open to anyone to question how far he spoke the sentiments of the mass of the Irish population. At any rate, it is quite evident that any responsible man in this country, taking up the question of Home Rule at that time, and urging the belief that it was the desire of the mass of the Irish population, would have been encountered in every quarter of the House with an incredulity that it would have been totally impossible for him to have overcome. Well, I own that to me that question is a settled question. I live in a country of representative institutions; I have faith in representative institutions; and I will follow them out to their legitimate consequences; and I believe it to be dangerous in the highest degree, dangerous to the Constitution of this country and to the unity of the Empire, to show the smallest hesitation about the adoption of that principle. Therefore, that principle for me is settled.

The second question—and it is equally an indispensable condition with the first—is this, is Home Rule a thing compatible or incompatible with the unity of the Empire? Again and again, as may be in the recollection of Irish Members, I have challenged, in this House and elsewhere, explanations upon the subject, in order that we might have clear knowledge of what it was they so veiled under the phrase, not exceptionable in itself, but still open to a multitude of interpretations. Well, that question was settled in my mind on the first night of the present Session, when the hon. Gentleman the Leader of what is termed the Nationalist Party from Ireland declared unequivocally that what he sought under the name of Home Rule was autonomy for Ireland. Autonomy is a name well known to European law and practice, as importing, under an historical signification sufficiently definite for every practical purpose, the management and control of the affairs of the territory to which the word is applied, and as being perfectly compatible with the full maintenance of Imperial unity. If any part of what I have said is open to challenge it can be challenged by those who read my speeches, and I find that there are many readers of my speeches when there is anything to be got out of them and turned to account. I am quite willing to stand that test, and I believe that what I have said now is the exact and literal and absolute truth as to the state of the case.

I shall not dwell at any great length on the general argument in favour of the Bill; but I will notice one or two points that have been taken, and which if they do not express any very definite argument, yet give expression to feelings which are entitled on my part to deference and respect. A great objection which is felt by some hon. Gentlemen is much to this effect:—"Do not, in these great matters, experiment in politics; do not let us have this kind of legislation, uncertain as to its effect, involving great issues, and therefore liable to be marked—I may say stigmatized—by the name of experiment." Because, although in one sense every law is an experiment, yet I perfectly understand, and I am the first to admit, that experimenting in politics is a bad and a dangerous practice. Now, what is experimenting in politics? If I understand it, it is the practice of proposing grave changes without grave causes. Is this a case in which there is no grave cause with which we have to deal? Why, Sir, we have to deal with the gravest of all causes that can solicit the attention of a Legislature—namely, the fact that we have to treat the case of a country where the radical sentiment of the people is not in sympathy with the law. [*Murmurs.*] I defy any man, be he an opponent or not, to deny that we have to deal with the case of a country where the radical sentiment of the people is not in sympathy with the law. Of course, I am making general assertions. I do not say that an action on a bill of exchange between debtor and creditor in Ireland could not be settled without reference to any international prejudice. I speak of the most important parts of the law—of those parts which touch agricultural relations, the one great standing, pervading employment and occupation of the country—I speak above all of the Criminal Law, of the very first exigencies of political society; and I will not argue the question whether the Criminal Law of Ireland, especially when it concerns agricultural relations, has or has not the sympathy of the people until I find someone who is ready to say after all he knows about evictions, about the operations of the Land League, and about the verdicts of juries, that the Criminal Law in Ireland has the sympathy of the people. Not only is this a matter of fact, but it is a matter of fact with which we are constantly dealing, which has run through three generations of men, and that almost without intermission.

We have tried expedients. What has been our great expedient? Our great expedient has been that to which I admit *primâ facie* a Government will first and justifiably resort. Our first expedient has been that which is known as repression or coercion. Has that class of experiment, has that class of expedient been successful? I argued this point at full length in introducing the Bill, and I will not argue it now at any detail whatsoever. I will only make this one assertion, which I believe to be absolutely undeniable—namely, that this medicine of coercion, if it be a medicine, is a medicine which we have been continually applying in increasing doses with diminishing results. When a physician has before him such a phenomenon as that he should direct his attention and his efforts to some other quarter and to some other method. We have—and I am glad to admit it—tried remedies. I see it stated sometimes that nothing has been so miserable a failure as the course of remedial legislation with respect to Ireland with which the Members of the present Government, and I myself, for a long time have been associated. I refer now to the removal of religious disabilities, to the Disestablishment of the Church, to the reform of the Land Laws, and to the removal—or, if not the absolute removal, to the enormous mitigation—of the intolerable grievances, perhaps the worst of all after the land grievance, under which Ireland used to labour with respect to education.

If I am asked what I think of all these measures, I deny that they have failed. We have not failed, but we have not finished. They have had this effect—that the disease of Ireland has taken a different and a milder form. [*Cheers and laughter.*] I am sorry to arouse scepticism whichever way I go. When I said just now that social order in Ireland was disturbed there were signs of dissent from hon. Members opposite—[*Ironical cheers*]—and now, when I say that the disease of Ireland has taken a milder form, there are also signs of dissent; and it seems to me impossible that anything said by me can be true. My meaning is this—the disease of Ireland is in a milder form; but, in my opinion, it is in a form still extremely serious, and yet a milder form than it took in 1832, when murders, excesses, and outrages were manifold to what they are now, so as to indicate a different state of things at the present time from what existed then, and an undoubted growth of what are known as law-abiding habits—or I might go further back to the dreadful Rebellion of 1798, which took a great effort on the part of this country to put down. No, Sir; that legislation has not failed. I admit that it is incomplete; that it has not reached, that it has not touched the goal, the terminating point of the race we had to run, and something yet remains to be done.

But there is another notion which has gone abroad. I have spoken of former expedients and remedies; but there is now a notion that something might be done by judicious mixtures of coercion and concessions. These judicious mixtures are precisely the very thing that we have tried. Go back to the Roman Catholic Emancipation. The Duke of Wellington made a judicious mixture upon that occasion. He proposed that we should open the doors of Parliament—and I am thankful he did so—to the Roman Catholics of Ireland; but he at the same time disfranchised the 40*s*. freeholder on the principle of judicious mixture. When Sir Robert Peel in 1843-4 put Mr. O'Connell on his trial, and succeeded in obtaining in Ireland a conviction which was afterwards quashed on a point of form, that was a strong step in the direction of coercion—but he followed it up immediately by the important Act for enlarging the endowment of Maynooth, by an Act for facilitating the granting of charitable bequests to the Roman Catholic Church; and I must also say—although it may shock some hon. Gentlemen opposite—by a third Act, which was then viewed as a great boon to the Roman Catholic interest—namely, the Act for the foundation of undenominational Colleges. There was another case of judicious mixture. It happened, when we were disestablishing the Church, there was great disorder in Westmeath, and in the middle, I think, of the Land Bill, we arrested the progress of that measure and introduced a very strong measure of coercion for Westmeath, all on the principle of judicious mixture. The Government which came into Office in 1880, and which was put out of Office in 1885—the whole course of that Government was nothing but one of rigid and incessant effort of judicious mixtures. Therefore, do not let us suppose that the merit of novelty attaches to that recommendation.

But I have seen another recommendation made, and made, I think, by a person of very great authority, I believe in my hearing, to the effect that if we could only cast away Party spirit in dealing with Ireland we should do well. Then, I think, a good many hon. Members opposite cheered, indicating that they were ready to cast away Party spirit. What is meant by this? Is it meant that Party spirit is to be expelled generally from the circuit of English politics? Is that so? Is there a dreamer who, in the wildness of his dreams, has imagined that you can really work the free institutions of this country upon any other principles than those in the main which your fathers have handed down to you and which have made the country what it is? [*Cheers and loud counter cheers.*] Those cheers may be meant in sarcasm. I accept them in good faith. I believe that in uttering the words that I have just used I have quite as strong a meaning, and I am ready to act upon the principle which I have laid down quite as much, and perhaps a little more, than a great many hon. Members opposite who cheered. It may be said—"We do not think you can get on altogether without Party spirit, but do, at any rate, cast out Party spirit from Irish affairs." Is that a more hopeful recommendation?

It will be convenient to take the case of the two sides of the House separately, and first I ask is it desirable that the Tory Party should cast out Party spirit? I should say—undoubtedly. But if I should press it upon the right hon. Gentleman opposite he would be entitled to make an answer to me which I should feel to be a crushing answer, because he would say—"Before you talk of casting away Party spirit from the handling of Irish affairs you must show that it has been applied to those affairs in some sense different from, and in a more guilty and more mischievous manner than, it has been applied to other affairs." I will not speak of the last year or two, during which there may have been strong prejudices. I will go back half a century to the time when great resistance was offered, and I, as an humble and as a silent follower, had my share of responsibility for that resistance. I mean the resistance to the extension of the franchise in Ireland, especially of the municipal franchise. I deeply lament that opposition was ever offered; I may say *quorum pars exigua fui*. The conduct of the Tory Party of that day under Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington, Lord Stanley, and Sir James Graham, although very mistaken, was perfectly honest. I am not prepared to say that Irish affairs have been handled in this House, speaking generally, by either Party with a larger admixture of Party feeling or with a smaller flavour of true patriotic tone than other affairs of the country. It is idle to set up as remedies, as alternatives, and as policies to adopt in great crises these suggestions which are totally visionary and unreal, and which never could become the basis of human action in a Legislative Assembly.

So much for experiment. Here I stand upon the ground that a great necessity is before us, that a growing and urgent evil requires to be dealt with, that some strong and adequate application to the case is requisite, and that the whole and the only question is whether the application we propose is the right one. Let me say this upon this particular question of a Legislature for Ireland, that it appears to be a very popular topic with our opponents, who say—"Why do you depart from the course taken by all the statesmen of the nineteenth century?" Now, let us see what has been done and said by all "the statesmen of the nineteenth century." The great case produced is the famous Repeal debate in 1834, in which I myself was one of the majority who voted against the Repeal of the Union. A very remarkable passage from a very remarkable speech of Sir Robert Peel, well deserving to be kept fresh in the memory of posterity, from its terseness and power, has again become familiar to the people of this day, as I myself heard it with my own ears that day, with admiration. What was Sir Robert Peel then doing? In the first place, he was opposing the Repeal of the Union. You call this Repeal of the Union. [*Opposition cheers.*] You must at least allow us to have an opinion on that subject. For my part, I am not prepared at this moment to say that the question of the Repeal of the Union should be reopened. I may be right or wrong in that matter, but my opinion is that Ireland has done much, by wisdom and moderation, by bringing her essential demands within certain limits, to facilitate the task set before us. But, even if this were Repeal of the Union, I admit, without the least question, that up to a certain point the Union is upon its trial. I admit, without the least question, that in my opinion this Bill constitutes a most important modification of that Act. But was Sir Robert Peel in the same circumstances in 1834 as we found ourselves in 1884? He had had one generation of experience; we have had nearly three. In the days when he spoke, the Statute Book of England was loaded with a mass of Acts inflicting the most cruel grievances upon Ireland, and it was a perfectly rational opinion for a man like Lord Macaulay, who was deeply interested in Ireland, and other politicians of his character, to think that by the removal of those grievances you might save the Union. What was then a matter of reasoning and speculation has now become a matter of knowledge.

So Lord Macaulay is one who is quoted like Sir Robert Peel. I remember well a passage of splendid eloquence delivered by Lord Macaulay against the

Repeal of the Union, a Union of which I will not say anything more now than that I do not desire to rake up the history of that movement—a horrible and shameful history, for no epithets weaker than these can in the slightest degree describe or indicate ever so faintly the means by which, in defiance of the national sentiment of Ireland, consent to the Union was attained. I think in 1834, or not very distant from that date, Lord Macaulay, in words of burning eloquence, denounced the Repeal of the Union. Lord Macaulay, I think in 1859, or certainly many years later in his life, if not so late as that, in his *Life of Pitt*, declared that the Union without the measures which Mr. Pitt finally hoped to procure from it—and to which it became, in fact, the greatest impediment—without those measures the Union was union only in name, and, being a union only in name, it was in rank opposition to all the national and patriotic sentiment of Ireland. How was it possible that its authority could commend itself to the people of that country? I do not admit that the question of the Union, so far as it is now on its trial, has been decided, or has been touched, by statesmen of the nineteenth century. Those of whom I spoke never had before them what we have before us, the bitter fact, the rich though painful story of the experience which the rolling years of the last half-century have afforded us.

Well, then, Sir, we are told again with extraordinary boldness—"Why do you depart from the old Whig traditions?" If there is one thing more than another which my hon. Friend the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) was doing in his admirable speech which he delivered on this subject, it was in showing that he was acting in strict consonance and conformity with the old Whig traditions. What were the old Whig traditions? The organs of that tradition were Mr. Sheridan and Lord Grey—the Lord Grey of that day—or rather the Mr. Grey of that day, afterwards still more famous as Lord Grey. Then there were Lord Fitzwilliam and, above all, Mr. Fox, and even above Mr. Fox himself there was Mr. Burke. Upon this great subject of the relations with Ireland Mr. Burke never modified by one hair's breadth the generous and wise declaration of his youth and of his maturer manhood. Mr. Burke did not live to the date of the Union, but he placed on record, in the first place, his political adhesion to the opinions of Mr. Grattan; and, in the second place, he placed upon record his full satisfaction with the state of things that prevailed in Ireland—the political state of things, especially the Acts of 1782 and 1783, and in a letter written not long before his lamented death he said that he trusted that Ireland had seen the last of her revolutions. By that he meant that the Act of 1782 did amount to a revolution—a blessed and peaceful revolution, but still a revolution—a revolution effected by those peaceful means, by that bold and wise British statesmanship, such as in 1844, and again at a later period, was commended by Lord Beaconsfield.

It may be said with perfect truth that Lord Grey declined at a later date to be a party to the Repeal of the Union. In that respect, in my opinion, he was perfectly consistent. For my own part, if I may refer to myself, I do not at all regret the vote which I gave 52 years ago against the Repeal of the Union, considering what that repeal involved, and considering the amount of information we had with regard to its working. The Union, whatever may be our opinion with regard to the means by which it was obtained, was a Statute of vast importance, for it modified and in many respects transformed the relations between Great Britain and Ireland. Such a statute as that cuts deep tracts in history; those tracts cannot be effaced in later times. But we are acting in most complete conformity with Whig traditions and the principles upon which Whig statesmen founded their action. They did not say that the principle of the Union between Great Britain and Ireland was abstractly bad; they did not say—"We in our minds are opposed to it, and therefore Ireland and Great Britain shall not have it;" but they said it was opposed to the sentiment of the Irish people. They said it was in opposition to all that was most honourable and upright, most respected, and most disinterested in Ireland, and nothing but mischief, nothing but disorder, nothing but dishonour, could come from a policy founded upon the overriding of all those noble qualities, and by means which would not bear the face of day, imposing the arbitrary will of the Legislature upon the nation, in spite of its almost unanimous opposition.

Now, Sir, it should be borne in mind that there was at that time in existence the greatest difference of sentiment from what we now witness in Ireland. The North was more opposed to the Union probably than the South. I remember that the town of Cork used to be quoted as a spot on which love of the Union might be detected by the careful observer. Unquestionably the promises held out by Mr. Pitt did induce a division of sentiment among the Roman Catholic clergy of that time. I believe that the Irish national patriotic sentiment which I have mentioned with sympathy was more vivid in the North of Ireland than in any other quarter.

Well, Sir, hon. Gentlemen say—"Do not talk to us about foreign countries; do not talk to us about British Colonies; do not mention Canada, it has nothing whatever to do with the case. Canada is loyal and content; Ireland is disloyal and disaffected." But Sir Charles Gavan Duffy in an able paper admits the charge. He says—

> "When it was determined to confer Home Rule on Canada, Canada was in the precise temper attributed to Ireland. She did not get Home Rule because she was loyal and friendly, but she is loyal and friendly because she got Home Rule."

Now, Sir, I am, on this subject, able to speak as a witness. I sat in Parliament during the whole of the Canadian controversy, and I even took, what was for me, as a young Member, an active part in the discussions upon the subject. And what was that Canadian controversy? The case of Canada is not parallel to the case of Ireland. It does not agree in every particular, and the Bill which we offer to Ireland is different in many important particulars from the Acts which have disposed of the case of Canada. But although it is not parallel it is analogous. It is strictly and substantially analogous. What, Sir, was the issue in the case of Canada? Government from Downing Street. These few words embrace the whole controversy — Government from Downing Street being, of course, under the Government of St. Stephen's.

What was the cry of those who resisted the concession of autonomy to Canada? It was the cry which has slept for a long time, and which has acquired vigour from sleeping—it was the cry with which we are now becoming familiar—the cry of the unity of the Empire. Well, Sir, in my opinion the relation with Canada was one of very great danger to the unity of the Empire at that time; but it was the remedy for the mischief and not the mischief itself which was regarded as dangerous to the unity of the Empire. Here I contend that the cases are precisely parallel, and that there is danger to the unity of the Empire in your relations with Ireland; but unfortunately, while you are perfectly right in raising the cry, you are applying the cry and the denunciation to the remedy, whereas you ought to apply it to the mischief.

In those days what happened? In those days, habitually in this House, the mass of the people of Canada were denounced as rebels. Some of them were Protestants and of English and Scotch birth. The majority of them were Roman Catholic and of French extraction. The French rebelled. Was that because they were of French extraction and because they were Roman Catholics? [An hon. MEMBER: Yes.] No, Sir; for the English of Upper Canada did exactly the same thing. They both of them rebelled, and perhaps I may mention—if I may enliven the strain of the discussion for a moment—that I remember Mr. O'Connell, who often mingled wit and humour with his eloquence in those days when the discussion was going on with regard to Canada, and when Canada was the one dangerous question—the one question which absorbed interest in this country as the great question of the hour—when we were engaged in that debate, Mr. O'Connell intervened, and referred to the well-known fact that a French orator and statesman named Papineau had been the promoter and the leader of the agitation in Canada; and what said Mr. O'Connell? He said—

> "The case is exactly the case of Ireland with this difference, that in Canada the agitator had got the 'O' at the end of his name instead of at the beginning."

Well, these subjects of Her Majesty rebelled—were driven to rebellion and were put down. We were perfectly victorious over them, and what then happened? Directly the military victory was assured—as Mr. Burke told the men of the day of the American War—the moment the military victory was assured the political difficulty began. Did they feel it? They felt it; they gave way to it. The victors were the vanquished, for if we were victors in the field we were vanquished in the arena of reason. We acknowledged that we were vanquished, and within two years we gave complete autonomy to Canada. And now Gentlemen have forgotten this great lesson of history. By saying that the case of Canada has no relation to the case of Ireland, I refer to that little sentence written by Sir Charles Duffy, who himself exhibits in his own person as vividly as anybody the transition from a discontented to a loyal subject.

> "Canada did not get Home Rule because she was loyal and friendly, but she has become loyal and friendly because she has got Home Rule."

Now I come to another topic, and I wish to remind you as well as I can of the definition of the precise issue which is at the present moment placed before us. In the introduction of this Bill I ventured to say that its object was to establish, by the authority of Parliament, a Legislative Body to sit in Dublin for the conduct of both legislation and administration under the conditions which may be prescribed by the Act defining Irish as distinctive from Imperial affairs. I laid down five, and five only, essential conditions which we deemed it to be necessary to observe. The first was the maintenance of the unity of the Empire. The second was political equality. The third was the equitable distribution of Imperial burdens. The fourth was the protection of minorities. And the fifth was that the measure which we proposed to Parliament—I admit that we must stand or fall by this definition quite as much as by any of the others—that the measure should present the essential character and characteristics of a settlement of the question.

Well, Sir, that has been more briefly defined in a Resolution of the Dominion Parliament of Canada, with which, although the definition was simpler than my own, I am perfectly satisfied. In their view there are three vital points which they hope will be obtained, and which they believe to be paramount, and theirs is one of the most remarkable and significant utterances which have passed across the Atlantic to us on this grave political question. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!" *from the Opposition.*] I just venture to put to the test the question of the equity of those Gentlemen. You seem to consider that these manifestations are worthless. Had these manifestations taken place in condemnation of the Bills and policy of the Government, would they have been so worthless?

A question so defined for the establishment of a Legislative Body to have effective control of legislation and administration in Ireland for Irish affairs, and subject to those conditions about which, after all, there does not appear in principle to be much difference of opinion among us—that is the question on which the House is called upon to give a vote, as solemn and as important as almost, perhaps, any in the long and illustrious records of its history.

Sir, in the interval which has taken place since the introduction of the Bill much discussion has arisen upon a variety of its particulars which I am very far from grumbling or complaining at. One of them, however, is exciting so much feeling that it is quite necessary that it should receive the notice of my Colleagues and of myself in the present debate. I mean that which relates to the exclusion or disappearance—for it really can hardly be called an exclusion when it is rather desired and sought for by the parties themselves—of the Irish Members from the Benches of this House.

Now, Sir, in this explanation which I am about to give, I do not address myself to those who are hostile to the principle of this Bill. I wish with all my heart I could say something, without vitally prejudicing the public interests involved in this measure, that would tend to reconcile or to abridge the differences between Her Majesty's Government and a body of Gentlemen with whom hitherto they have had the happiness of acting in as perfect concord—allowing for the necessary freedom of human opinion and the occasional differences that may arise—as ever consolidated together the different sections of the Liberal Party. Unhappily, Sir, while I have the most cordial respect for those Gentlemen, I am not able to promise myself that they will listen with much interest to what I have got to say. There are others who as I believe accept not less cordially than Her Majesty's Government themselves what I have declared to be the principle of this Bill, and who at the same time see greater difficulties than we do—though we have seen great difficulties all along, and I never represented this measure as one in which all the points were clearly indisputable. The case bristles with difficulties of detail throughout, which only require goodwill and patient intelligence to deal with, and different men feel them in different modes and different degrees.

What has happened, Sir, is this. I do not deny the fact that many friends of this measure, whom we should be loth indeed to alienate, have taken strong objection to the provisions with respect to the future absence of Irish Members from this House under two heads. In the first place, they recall a proposition which I myself stated very strongly in introducing the Bill—namely, the great political principle that there ought not to be taxation without representation. In that I stated what was an obvious truth. It is quite evident that we never would enforce upon Ireland taxation without representation, and nothing but the consent of Ireland could have induced Her Majesty's Government to contemplate such a thing for a single moment. But many gentlemen—and I do not find fault with them—are not satisfied even with the consent of Ireland. Gentlemen will recollect that though we now hear sometimes of persons being more Popish than the Pope, and many phrases of that kind, the original phrase was *Hibernis ipsis Hiberniores.* The meaning of that phrase was this—that those English families, those portions of the English race, who went and planted themselves amongst the Irishry, after a moderate time became more Irish than the Irish themselves. We have had that illustrated wholesale on the present occasion. I must own that this is a difficulty which I regard with respect and with sympathy, and I trust that in any attempt to meet it I shall have the sympathy of the House in general—at all events, of those who can on any terms tolerate the principle of this Bill. Besides that objection — which is an objection strictly upon argumentative and Constitutional grounds as respects taxation—there is undoubtedly another sentiment more vague, less definite, in a different region of the human mind; there is a sentiment of regret that there should cease to be a symbolical manifestation of the common concern of Ireland with ourselves in the unity of the Empire, and in the transaction of Imperial affairs.

Well, now, Sir, how do we stand with regard to this case? First of all, let me say, however much it may appear to be a paradox to English Members, yet history undoubtedly teaches us that, to whatever cause it may be due, foreign affairs, what I may call over-sea affairs, do not stand in exactly the same relations to Ireland as they do to England and Scotland. This is what I mean—I am not raising any disputable proposition—I mean the feeling of the people; and it appears to me perfectly natural that the inhabitants of a country like Ireland, whose difficulties have been so great, whose woes have been innumerable, whose hopes have been intermittent and continually disappointed—the history of a country like that must throw back the mind of the people upon itself and its own concerns, and in that way it is that I can understand why it is that Irish Gentlemen do now—what we all do if we are men of common sense in the common affairs of life—that is, we look to the principle, and do not think so much about objects which in our view are secondary as that which is central and essential, that which is central and essential being the management of Irish affairs. What I am now going to say has not had so much notice as it deserves. Ireland is not so entirely excluded by the Bill as it stands from Imperial affairs as Gentlemen may be disposed to think. I refer, and I by no means refer alone, to the principle which is contained in the 39th clause of the Bill—the clause which provides for the recall of Irish Representatives of both Houses before this House can proceed to any alteration of the Statute upon which the two Legislatures are not in accord. I hope that is a provision which there will be little, if any, occasion for putting into action. But the principle involved is an important principle.

Besides that, there is another clause which provides that in certain circumstances the Irish Assembly may vote sums of money in relation to subjects which are excluded from its ordinary cognizance. This provision has been misunderstood to mean that the Irish Legislative Body might, in certain circumstances, vote money for the establishment of a Church.

Well, Sir, I have really not examined whether the words of the Statute will bear such a construction as has been put upon them. But if they bear such a construction, undoubtedly an effectual remedy ought to be applied. The meaning of the words is simply this—our belief in drawing the Act was this—that it might be felt right in the event, as I trust the improbable event, of a great war, wherein this country and Ireland were engaged with a common feeling and common interest, for the Crown to send a Message to the Irish Legislative Body to ask them freely to testify their participation in our interests and privileges by voting money and supplies. [*Opposition laughter.*] Some Gentlemen differ from me as to the measure by which they estimate the ludicrous and the serious. My own estimates are sometimes in an inverse relation to theirs. What they think ludicrous seems to me to be serious, and possibly *vice versâ*. It is supposed to be ridiculous that a practically independent Body in Ireland—[*Opposition cheers*]—yes, practically independent in the regular exercise of its statutory functions — should entertain such a proposal. But it was not ridiculous when Ireland had an independent Parliament.

I said just now that it was a wonderful thing to see how little in other days Ireland had interposed in foreign affairs. I have had the debates looked up during the whole period of Grattan's Parliament, and if I except certain discussions relating to foreign Treaties of Commerce—I will speak of that matter by-and-by—there are only two occasions upon which that Parliament debated foreign affairs so far as I can discover. Both of those occasions are occasions on which by Message from the Crown they were invited to vote sums of money for purposes of war. One of them was in 1790, when there was a seizure of British vessels by Spanish men-of-war. A vote of money was then asked and was given. The second was in 1795, when a contribution was asked towards the expenses of the French War. On the first occasion the Irish Parliament granted the money without question. I do not believe myself that pecuniary illiberality has ever been a vice of Ireland. On the second occasion they granted it, but moved an Amendment, full, I think, of good sense, hoping for a speedy conclusion of hostilities. For my part, I heartily wish that prayer of the Irish Parliament had been complied with. I take blame to myself for not having explained to the House the provision to which I have just referred—namely, the provision for the voting of money by the Irish Legislative Body in answer to the Message from the Crown. But my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary will bear me out when I say that after I had spoken I remarked to him that I regretted the omission of which I had been guilty.

Moreover, Sir, although the Statute will limit the legislative powers of the Irish Legislative Body, there are other moral powers of influence which it will possess, and which we do not and cannot limit. The privilege of speech is not going to be taken away from Ireland—that privilege of free speech will attach to the Members of this Legislative Body and to the Legislative Body collectively, and a considerable influence may be exercised upon proceedings at Westminster through Resolution, and by Address from the Legislative Body.

However, Sir, while I wish these provisions to be understood, I do not mean to limit what I have to say by reference to them. I wish to say what Her Majesty's Government have thought to be their duty with regard to the feeling which has been copiously expressed in many portions of the country by gentlemen friendly to the principle of the Bill. Undoubtedly, it is our plain duty to consider how far we can go without prejudice to the main purpose of the Bill to meet that desire. We shall do that upon grounds of policy, and upon grounds of principle. We shall make willing steps in that direction as far as duty will permit us to go. There are three things which I had better at once say we cannot do, and are unwilling to entertain in any shape. We are not willing to break up the Parliamentary traditions of this House, or to introduce a principle of confusion into the working of the House. That is the first. The second is, we are not willing to fetter against its will the action of the Irish

Legislative Body in any case except where cardinal and Imperial interests require it. We will do nothing that shall have the effect of placing our measure in such a condition that Ireland, through her Representatives, can only offer to it a qualified and a grudging, instead of a free, cordial assent and acceptance. And, third, we can do nothing that will have the effect of placing the Committee of the Bill before the second reading. That may be a phrase mysterious to some, but the meaning of it is this—that to determine in detail, even if upon points of importance, everything which is of great interest touching this Bill before you obtain assent to the principle of the Bill is not practicable, and if it be practicable the Rules of this House are based upon folly, for undoubtedly it would be much more convenient in many respects, before you are called upon to assent to the principle of a Bill, to have it in the exact form in which it is to be finally adopted.

There is another thing to be considered, and it is this. It has very often happened to me, in the course of a great experience in Parliamentary legislation, that you hold communications with one class of gentlemen—you happen to be good tempered or bad tempered as the case may be—you feel a great desire to meet the views of that class of gentlemen, and you unwarily pledge yourself to propose the thing they desire. It is settled within the four walls of a private room. Then you come into this House, which, happily—I thank God for it—is the place of the most thorough publicity in the whole world, and you find other sets of persons, quite as much entitled to be heard, who are at daggers drawn with the first. But the Government has unwarily committed itself; and a quarrel ensues. While it is perfectly possible that if they had been allowed to reserve their discretion, and freely to consider the particulars in the Committee, they might have been able to find means to conciliate those of opposite views, so as to bring about general satisfaction. What I mean is this, and I think the House will agree with me, I admit that when a thing is right, and when you see it to be practicable, you may promise before the second reading of a Bill that, if agreeable to the House, you will do it. But we cannot do more than promise a fair consideration hereafter to a fair proposal, unless it is such a proposal as we can see our way to embodying in a workable shape. I do not think that is an unfair proposal. In violation of these three conditions we can do nothing. But we are ready and willing to do everything that they will allow.

Then I take the first objection that has been made to the proposed exclusion of the Irish Representatives from this Parliament. It is that the principal that representation should accompany taxation would thereby be violated. Now, what I am about to say involves a considerable responsibility; but the question whether and how far the difficulty may be met has been considered; and I am prepared to say that we can give full satisfaction to those who advance this objection. If agreeable to the House, we will meet it in Committee by providing that when a proposal is made to alter the taxation in respect of Customs and Excise Irish Members shall have an opportunity of appearing in this House to take a share in the transaction of that Business. It will then be impossible to urge against the Bill that it is proposed by the Govnrnment that representation should not accompany taxation.

In regard to such matters of common interest between Great Britain and Ireland as those which form the subject of Foreign Treaties, no doubt the objections urged from some quarters may be met in some considerable degree by the adoption of a system of executive communications, which is the system adopted in certain foreign countries. There are cases in which two countries are disunited in their Legislatures, but united in national action and feeling. They find themselves able, by executive communications, to provide for the common handling of common subjects. But we do not feel that the plan of executive communications need of necessity be the only one. There are various plans which have been proposed in order to indicate and maintain common action on Imperial subjects, and which are well worthy of consideration. For example, it has been proposed that a Joint Commission should be appointed representing the Houses of Parliament on this side of the water and representing the Irish Legislative Body in due proportion of Members, and that that Commission should meet from time to time, as occasion might arise, during the Session of Parliament to consider common questions and report their opinions to both Legislative Bodies upon many, at any rate, of the Imperial matters that are reserved by the Bill as it stands. I hesitate to say upon "any" of those questions, for I incline to the belief, for example, that the question relating to the succession of the Crown—in all the different branches of the subject—ought not to go to any secondary authority. But I can conceive that many subjects, such, for example, as Treaties of Commerce, might well be considered by a Commission of this kind. I do not say of this plan as absolutely as I do of the plan as to taxation, that we are quite ready to propose it if it be the wish of Parliament, for it has been little canvassed, and objections may be raised to it which we have failed to anticipate; but I can say that we look at the proposal as one which might satisfy jealousies, might have other advantages, and is not open, so far as we know, to serious objection.

Another proposal is that a Joint Committee of the kind which I have described could be appointed to consider how far and upon what conditions other than those provided in the Statute Irish Members should come here. There is yet another suggestion, that Irish Members might be entitled to come to Parliament—I assume generally that corresponding opportunity would be given to Irish Peers—upon occasions when the Legislative Body should, by an Address to the Crown, have expressed a desire that they should do so. I do not say that that is open to objection on principle. At the same time, I see considerable difficulties as to the particular way of making it a practicable plan. I will, however, state broadly that it is our duty to give an unprejudiced ear to proposals which others may make for the purpose of insuring the continued manifestation of common interest between Great Britain and Ireland in Imperial concerns. That end, we say distinctly, is a good end; means for attaining it we regard with favour, subject to the condition that they shall not be so handled as to introduce into this House the principle of confusion, nor so handled as to impose on the Irish Legislative Body limitations of its liberty in any matters except such as affect high Imperial policy.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.) asked whether the Irish Members would re-appear in their full numbers?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I am much obliged to the noble Lord. The clause now in the Bill contemplating the recall of the Irish Representatives in a certain contingency makes no difference from the present arrangements as to the numbers in which they would come. We do not feel that the subject involves a vital principle, nor have we arrived at any binding decision; but my own personal opinion is that if we were to bring back the Irish Members in any other numbers than the present we should first have to devise a new system of election, and I am not sure that it would be wise to complicate the matter in that way. I should be inclined to hope that, so far as it is desirable that Irish Members should re-appear in Parliament, the Irish people would be liberally and amply, rather than scantily and jealously, represented.

There is only one other subject to which I must advert. We propose a change of which, if viewed as an abstract and speculative change, the postponement for a year or even longer would not have been a matter of vital consequence. But this concession, if you like to call it so—in my view it is something much higher than a concession, it is a great reformation and improvement—this change is not proposed upon grounds of general expediency alone, or in the view of abstract improvement alone; it is proposed in order to meet the first necessity of civilized society. Social order is not broken up in Ireland, it is undermined, it is sapped, and by general and universal confession it imperatively requires to be dealt with. It is because this measure is one for the restoration of social order by the removal, not merely of the symptoms but of the cause of the mischief, that we recommend it to the consideration of Parliament. We are all agreed up to a certain point—[An hon. MEMBER: No!] — all except a solitary Gentleman opposite. We all agree upon this, that social order in Ireland imperatively requires to be dealt with; but when we come to the method, then, unfortunately, our differences come into view. Were

I to take all the individual opinions that have been expressed as to the mode of dealing with Irish questions, I should simply bewilder the House. I will only look at the main and leading divisions of power and influence in this Assembly.

There are in the House two great Parties, independently of the Irish Party, and there is a third Body whom I will not call a Party, because I am happy to think that as a Party we are not yet divided from them, and I trust may never be. But we are vitally divided on this great and significant question from those whom I will not call a Party, but whom I must call a Body, but who are so important that they may possibly hold the balance and decide the question between the two great British Parties in this House. The mass of the Irish Representatives have committed in the eyes of many Gentlemen opposite a new, a mortal offence—an offence more deadly than any former offence. They have committed the offence of agreeing with us in this matter. As long as their favours were bestowed in another quarter great toleration was to be expected, and was happily experienced, by them from those who are now very much shocked in their highest moral qualities at our alliance with the Irish Party, which alliance amounts simply to a coincidence of views on a great vital and determining public question.

Of the two political Parties in the House both have spoken and spoken plainly. I do, indeed I must, admire the tact, the caution, I will not say the astuteness, with which most of the Leaders of the Tory Party have abstained from overmuch hurrying themselves with forecasts of the future, or pledges as to the mode of meeting it, with regard to the Irish Question. Finding that they had on this side of the House allies—I do not use the word in an invidious sense, it is the same kind of alliance that there is with Gentlemen from Ireland—that is to say, it is an honourable and conscientious coincidence of opinion —finding that they had allies of that kind ready to do their work with equal politeness and wisdom, they have left the doing of that work to them. But notwithstanding that, they have spoken and spoken plainly for themselves. When the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) was brought to the point, and when it was said he had not declared a policy, he pointed—and he was justified in pointing—not even to a phrase, but to a date, and he said—"Our policy is the 26th of January." I accept that reply from the noble Lord. It is true and it is just, and that was, and that is, the declaration of policy for Ireland from the Tory Party.

I remember, and many others may recollect, the fervid and almost endless cheering with which the Gentlemen then sitting on this side of the House accepted the announcement of the 26th of January. That is a plain, manly, and straightforward announcement. What was it? The notice did not convey, and we could not expect that it should convey, a full description of the proposals that were to be made; but it so far described them that it indicated one point with perfect clearness, and that was the suppression of the National League. I may say, in parenthesis, that I trust that we shall be suppressors of the National League. That, if it comes about, will certainly be by a different process. The suppression of the National League —what does it mean and what does it come to?

A noble Friend of mine, to whom I refer with the greatest respect, when he held office in Ireland, said:—"We want to drive discontent under the ground." I own I thought at the time that that expression was what is called a slip of the tongue, and I suppose there is no man among us who does not occasionally slip into that form of error. But if instead of its being a slip of the tongue it is exalted into a policy, then what is the meaning of the suppression of the National League? It is the conversion of the proceedings of that body—which I am not now called upon to discuss or characterize—it is the conversion of the proceedings of that body, taken daringly but openly in the face of day, into the proceedings of secret societies—the last resort in this and other countries of the extreme and hopeless difficulties of political problems; and, in my opinion, nothing is to be gained by procuring and bringing about the substitution of the secret communities for the open action of a body like the National League.

It is sought apparently to take away discontent from the surface. We are not contented with so limited an ambition. We desire to take away discontent neck and crop. We desire to abolish it root and branch, or, if I may once more put into requisition a phrase which had its day, we desire to abolish Irish discontent "bag and baggage." I do not believe that Parliament would pass a proposal for the abolition, in the present circumstances, of the National League. If it did pass such a proposal, in my opinion it is doubtful whether it would have made any contribution whatever to a real solution of the Irish difficulty; whether, on the contrary, it would not have administered a new aggravation to it. However that may be, I own that that Party has spoken plainly, and their policy is summed up in the words "repression or coercion."

When this Government was formed it was formed on the principle of looking for some method of dealing with Ireland other than by the method of coercion; and that policy has now taken definite form and shape in the proposal of autonomy for Ireland. You have spoken plainly and we have spoken plainly. Has the third power in the House spoken plainly? Has that power which is to hold the scales, and which may decide the issue, told the country in what manner, when it is forced to face this tremendous problem, it intends to deal with it?

There are few men in this House, I am sure there is no man outside of it, who does not admire the temper and the courage with which my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) has behaved on this question. In obedience to his conscience, and to his conscience alone, he has rent asunder with pain, and perhaps with agony, Party ties to which he has been among the most faithful of all adherents. And speaking generally of those who act with him, I believe that in their several spheres the same may be said of them. Nor do I feel, although I may lament that they have come under what I think are narrow and blind influences, that their titles to my respect are one whit diminished by what they have said or done. I make these admissions freely and without stint. My noble Friend has assumed an immense responsibility. It is not for me to find fault with those who assume immense responsibility. My responsibility in this matter is perhaps even greater than his. Next to mine, and you will never find me here to extenuate it, I know no subject of Her Majesty that has a greater load of responsibility upon him than my noble Friend. I do not blame, I have no title to blame, him. All honour and praise to him for his undertaking the task which I know to be of enormous difficulty. But it may be a task of leading the determining and superior forces of Parliamentary opinion towards a conclusion on the Irish Question. If that is so, I ask what does he mean to do? Has not the time arrived when we ought to know what his policy is to be?

I have endeavoured to search it out by such means as I could. Is it to be the policy announced to the Loyalist minority at Belfast in November last? [A HOME RULE MEMBER: So-called Loyalist minority.] I assume the phrase. In politics I like to give to every class of men the name by which they like to be called. Well, Sir, in Belfast my noble Friend made very considerable promises on the 5th of last November, and he said an extremely bold thing—"I should not shrink," he said, "from a great and bold reconstruction of the Irish Government." Well, all I can say is this, that we who are now the Government are exceedingly daring; but our daring is nothing like yours. The man who will undertake to reconstruct the Irish Government without touching the legislative principle from which administrative government derives its life, if he is not a traitor or a fool—these are words not ours, but are reserved for Gentlemen quite different from us—he is either a magician or a man not much accustomed to the practical transaction of public affairs.

That is not all, Sir. My noble Friend did not stop by promising, in the exuberance of his zeal, that which I am convinced is absolutely impossible—namely, to reconstruct the Irish Government for any practical purpose without providing a new spring of action, which can only be provided on the principle of the policy we propose. But my noble Friend did not promise absolutely the principle of the policy we propose, because he said that nothing could be done in the direction of giving Ireland anything like complete control over her own affairs, either in a day, or a

Session, or perhaps a Parliament. But he pointed to the means by which it was to be done—namely, by the work of time, by the growth of small beginnings, the superstructure was to be raised on a wise and safe foundation. Yes; but what is the principle really at issue between us? It is this, not whether we are right in proposing at one step to give to Ireland complete control of her own affairs, but whether it is a thing right to be done at all. At Belfast in November my noble Friend in this passage implied that it might be a thing right to be done. To-night he is to move that it is a thing wrong to be done. What, then, is his policy? I am sorry to think that since November the movement of my noble Friend has not been forwards, but rather, as it appears to me, backwards. We have heard nothing since November of this complete reconstruction of the Irish Government, and the gradual progress on a sound foundation of a well-built structure. But I rejoice in that declaration on one ground—namely, that it implies that the complete control by Ireland of her own affairs is a thing which may be contemplated, and that in the view of my noble Friend it is a thing compatible with the unity of the Empire. Therefore, I am convinced that it is not a thing to be renounced *ab initio*—to be renounced and proscribed as a something tending to disintegrate and break up the unity of the Empire.

I confess that I do not believe in this gradual superstructure. I believe the meaning of it would be, if practicable, that a series of boons would be offered to Ireland, every one of which would, with an enormous loss of Parliamentary time and temper, and with an immense obstruction of Public Business, be either entirely repudiated by Ireland, or be received in a grudging temper and with the fullest notification that whatever power of that kind you gave her would be used simply as an instrument for acquiring more power. I am very disinterested upon that subject. I should have disappeared from the scene while my noble Friend's process was in a very early stage indeed. But I own I do not believe that that is the wisest method of dealing with the great Irish Question. I believe we have reached one of those crises in the history of nations where the path of boldness is the path, and the only path, of safety. At least we have come to a time when there is one thing we ought to know, and that is our own minds. We ought to know and we ought to tell our minds. There is another thing which I hold to be essential—we ought not to take this great Irish Question, and cast the fate of Ireland into the lottery of politics. I think it is obvious that I am not open to the reproach of casting the fate of Ireland into the lottery of politics, because what you tell me is that I am steering Ireland to utter destruction and certain ruin. If we are proposing to drive Ireland down the cataract, point out to us the way of escape. Is it really to be supposed that the last declaration of my noble Friend, which was the keeping alive of two or three clauses of the Crimes Act, which we intended to have kept in existence had we remained in Office last year—is that really the policy for Ireland? To that no assent, no approval has been given from the important Party opposite.

Sir, Parliament is entitled to know at this time of the day the alternatives that are open to its choice. You say that we offer the alternative of ruin. At any rate, in our view, it is of a very different character. But, even in your view, it is a definite proposal which is our justification on its behalf, and is the only contribution which we can make to the solution of the question. Parliament is entitled to have before it the alternatives proposed—the alternatives of policy, not of plan, proposed by those who are taking steps which may in certain contingencies with high probability bring into their hands the supreme direction of affairs. The Tory Party have announced their policy. Repression—the 26th of January. There is a policy I understand. Here I know with whom, and with what, I have to deal. But as regards my noble Friend, I must say that I am totally ignorant with whom, and with what, I am dealing, so far as policy is concerned. I hope that the Notice he has given for to-night has been given with the intention of tracing out for us a palpable and visible road into the darkness, and that he will tell us on what principle it is that he proposes to make provision for the government of Ireland. Let us know these alternatives. The more they are examined the better I believe it will be for us all. It will become reasonably clear—I will not say to demonstration—that we have before us a great opportunity of putting an end to the controversy of 700 years—aye, and of knitting together, by bonds firmer and higher in their character than those which heretofore we have mainly used, the hearts and affections of this people and the noble fabric of the British Empire.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. W. E. Gladstone.*)

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON (Lancashire, Rossendale), in rising to move "That the Bill be read a second time this day six months," said: Mr. Speaker, in moving the Amendment of which I have given Notice, I shall have to ask something more than the usual indulgence of the House. The House knows that it is not an easy or an agreeable task to follow in debate my right hon. Friend who has just sat down. During my long experience in this House it has never hitherto been my painful lot to have to do so. I have very frequently very far from envied those who had to take that part, and I feel now more convinced than I have ever done before that this can never have been an easy task, and especially I feel it when I have to follow a speech in which argument has been mingled to a considerable extent with statement, and when the provisions of a measure which has now been before us for a month have been, as far as I can understand, very considerably modified. I shall endeavour to refer to those points by and by; but before I come to the reasons which I shall give for moving the Amendment of which I have given Notice, I shall detain the House for only a very few moments by some observations with the smallest approach to a controversial character upon my right hon. Friend's speech. My right hon. Friend said in the early portion of his speech that he had asked himself the question whether Home Rule was compatible with the unity of the Empire, and he considered that that question had received a final and authoritative answer. And what was that answer? The question was settled in his mind by a speech made on the first day of the Session by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), who said that all he wanted for Ireland was autonomy, or the management of her own affairs. Now, Sir, is this great question, which has long been perplexing the mind of my right hon. Friend, to be solved by a single sentence spoken in debate for a manifest and obvious purpose by the Leader of the Irish National Party, when that sentence is in direct contradiction to almost everything that he and his Friends have hitherto said, and to the repeated assurances which they have given us that they were working and would work for and would be satisfied with nothing but complete separation? Did the hon. Member for Cork ever use the words "severance of the last link," or "complete independence," or did he ever say that no bounds were to be set to the aspirations of the Irish nation? I have not got the hon. Member's speeches here; but I ask everyone who has studied those speeches whether the hon. Member has ever stopped short of advocating for Ireland complete independence—[Several hon. MEMBERS: Legislative independence.]—and its restoration to a place among the nations of Europe? Well, Sir, I must say that I think the answer which my right hon. Friend has obtained to his doubts upon the subject of the compatibility of Home Rule in a united Empire is an unsatisfactory and an incomplete one. My right hon. Friend has said that the Government are charged with experimenting upon this great question; and the definition he gave of experimenting in politics was that of treating grave questions without grave causes. I do not deny that there may be grave causes, and that this is a grave question; but I should be rather inclined to define experimenting in politics as treating grave questions for grave causes, but without grave and mature consideration. Whatever may be the consideration which my right hon. Friend may have himself given to this policy and his measure, it is certain that the country and its Representatives have had no sufficient opportunity of forming their judgment or giving their decision upon it. And it is also equally notorious that, with very few exceptions, the Colleagues of my right hon. Friend up to the moment of their joining the present Government had formed opinions and expressed opinions upon the question of Ireland, I will not say diametrically opposed to, but certainly very little in harmony with, the policy of the Prime Minister. Sir, I do not know why my right hon. Friend should be disturbed at his policy being termed an experiment. That, in my opinion, is not the worst that can be said about it, for whether it be good, or whether it be bad, it must, at all events, be admitted that it is a novel experiment; for never, I believe, in the history of the world—certainly never in our own history—has the attempt been made to carry on the government of a country upon any such system as that which is now proposed for Ireland. I am not going into details; I went into them at too great a length the other night; but I venture to say there is no precedent for a great part of this scheme or the policy which is the foundation of it. It is, as I have before said, concocted from various precedents and examples; but there is no precedent which bears, with an approach to accuracy, upon the case that is before us. I say, whether it be good or bad, this is a policy which can be nothing but an experiment, and can only be ultimately judged by its results. Sir, I was astonished to hear my right hon. Friend throw some ridicule upon the policy which has been pursued in past times by Governments of which he has himself been a Member—I think he was a Member—but at all events by Ministers for whom he entertained a high respect. That policy he designated as the policy of "judicious mixture." He stated several cases in which a measure of a conciliatory character had been accompanied by a measure of coercion, or in which a measure of coercion had been accompanied or followed by a measure of conciliation. I do not think that any Minister or any Government ever admitted that these measures either of repression or of conciliation were proposed on any principle of judicious mixture. Each of those measures was proposed because the Government thought it a measure of justice or a measure of necessity. Catholic Emancipation, my right hon. Friend is fond of reminding us, was not conceded as a measure of justice, but it was conceded under the threat of civil war. But the other reforms to which he has referred to-night, and especially those which he carried himself, the Disestablishment of the Irish Church and the two Land Acts, were measures which we had always thought were inspired by a desire to do justice to the people of Ireland, and were not administered on any principle of counterpoise or judicious mixture. On the other hand, if there have been measures of repression, they have been proposed from time to time by former Ministers and by my right hon. Friend himself because they believed that they were measures of absolute necessity, which did not alter the spirit, the intention, or the scope of the law, and which were only necessary to enable the ordinary law to be put into execution. As on a former occasion, my right hon. Friend has denounced the Union between Great Britain and Ireland and the means by which it was accomplished. None of us, that I am aware, approve of those means. I have before admitted that I think it probable that the carrying of that measure at that time was premature. But will anyone—will my right hon. Friend himself—say that he believes the Constitution of 1782 and the relation between Ireland and Great Britain which existed in 1800 could have been a constant permanent Constitution, or could have been a permanent relation? Will he deny that it was certain that long before this time that Constitution must have been modified either in the direction of a more complete separation between the two countries or in the direction of some such Legislative Union as was effected in 1800? My right hon. Friend spoke of the statesmen of the 19th century, who are quoted as having all been opposed to the Repeal of the Union; but he was compelled to admit that one of the most illustrious of the Whig statesmen to whom he alludes was Lord Grey, and Lord Grey, who had been a great opponent of the Union, lived to be one of the strongest advocates of the Union and one of the strongest opponents of Repeal. My right hon. Friend says that those statesmen who thus supported the Union never had before them a state of facts similar to that with which we have to deal. I gather that he refers to the circumstance that until now there has never been an explicit Parliamentary declaration that the people of Ireland were in favour of Repeal or in favour of Home Rule. But, Sir, I believe, from all I can read, that the agitation of Mr. O'Connell was one which, although it did not attain to such large Parliamentary proportions, attained to at least as large National proportions as the present agitation has ever done; that it was supported with as much enthusiasm by at least as large a proportion of the people of Ireland. And, undoubtedly, that agitation enlisted upon its side a far larger and a more varied representation of all classes in Ireland than the Home Rule movement of later years has done. My right hon. Friend, in the eloquent peroration with which he closed his speech, said that I have taken a great responsibility upon myself in having taken so prominent a part in opposition to this measure; and he taunted the right hon. Gentleman opposite with having allowed us upon this side of the House to do most of the work in opposition to this Bill. I have explained on a former occasion why my Friends and I have taken this course. We know that this measure cannot be defeated merely by the opposition of the Conservative Party. We believe this Bill is a mischievous measure. We believe it is not one which will heal the feud, the long-standing feud, between Great Britain and Ireland. We believe it does not satisfy any of the essential conditions which have been laid down by my right hon. Friend himself. We believe it is not a final settlement of the question. We believe there is nothing in this measure which specially commends it, or ought to commend it, to those who profess Liberal principles; and, holding these opinions, we, who have the misfortune to differ from my right hon. Friend and from the great bulk of the Liberal Party which he leads, have thought it necessary not to conceal our opinions, not to take a passive or a neutral part, but to take that part which alone could give effect to the convictions we entertain, and which alone, in our judgment, can result in the defeat of this measure, which we believe to be injurious to the best interests of the nation. My right hon. Friend says that we have taken a great responsibility; and he calls upon me now and at once, and in answer to his invitation, to state what is my policy for Ireland. Sir, I can recollect no instance in the long and honourable political career of my right hon. Friend himself in which he has taken the course he now calls upon me to take. It has been, I conceive, the duty of my right hon. Friend on various occasions to oppose measures which he thought bad; but I do not recollect any occasion on which my right hon. Friend in Opposition has unfolded a policy which he was going to propose as soon as those measures were rejected. All I can say is that I recollect nothing of those passages in my speeches which my right hon. Friend has done me the honour to quote to-night. It is all very well to pass measures for the reconstruction of the Irish Government. Before Liberal statesmen embraced the doctrine of Home Rule we heard a great deal about the necessity for a reform and decentralization of the Administration. Is my right hon. Friend prepared to say that the existing system of Government in Ireland—the system popularly known as Dublin Castle, is the best system which can be devised concurrently with the Legislative Union between the two countries? Although I am not prepared to say in what direction and in what manner that system can be at once revised, I do believe that there are many reforms which can be made in that highly centralized, but yet somewhat inefficient, system of Government which has been for a long time past the object of the opprobrium, not only of hon. Members calling themselves Representatives of National feeling, but of many representing other shades of political opinion. Sir, I would reply to my right hon. Friend as my right hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) replied to him on a former occasion—it is not possible for any man now standing here to say what measures he is going to apply to Ireland after this Bill has been thrown out. Why, Sir, it depends, as my right hon. Friend said, upon the course taken by the Irish people and the leaders of the Irish people. We have a right to assume—we will assume until we are forced to assume the contrary—that the agitation in Ireland will be conducted by Parliamentary methods and Constitutional means; and, if that be so, I do not see why an attempt should not be made at the gradual process of the extension of local self-government in Ireland to which I referred in my speech at Belfast, and which I still believe to be sound, and a more statesmanlike method of proceeding than to attempt to confer on Ireland a cut-and-dried Constitution, separating and cutting off

Ireland completely from all political connection with the United Kingdom of England and Scotland. Before I leave that point, there is only one observation I must make. My right hon. Friend referred to my speech at Belfast as if I had indicated my willingness ultimately to grant to Ireland as large a measure of decentralization as is embodied in this Bill. I spoke simply and exclusively of those subjects which we understand in England and Scotland as included in the term local self-government; but there is nothing I said in that speech, or in any other speech, which ever indicated the slightest intention or willingness on my part to place the responsibility for the administration of the law relating to life and liberty and property entirely in the hands of the Representatives of the Irish people, and to separate from that responsibility altogether the Parliament and Government of this country. Now, Sir, after the speech of my right hon. Friend, and after the declaration which was published by him a short time ago, I think we are entitled to ask whether, in voting on the second reading of this Bill, we are now asked to vote for a measure which it is intended to pass into law or for an abstract Resolution? We were told the other day, and we have been told in similar terms to-night, that we are not now to busy ourselves with details and particulars; that their time will come; and that all we have to do now is to say that we will establish in Ireland a Legislative Body for the control of Irish affairs. Well, surely, if we are not to discuss details and particulars, if we are not to be allowed to discuss a plan proposed by the Government, for which the Government intend to take the responsibility, and to which they mean to adhere, how is it possible that we can give an answer to the question whether we are prepared to establish in Ireland a Legislative Body for the management of Irish affairs? That was formerly the view of my right hon. Friend himself. In 1874 — ["Oh!"] — well, my right hon. Friend has told us to-night that the first Home Rule movement took place in 1871, and he has quoted a speech made in that year. My right hon. Friend has, therefore, had time to give some attention to this subject. In 1874 Mr. Butt moved an Amendment to the Address raising the question of Home Rule, and my right hon. Friend himself replied. He said, if a Home Rule plan was proposed—

> "We shall first inquire whether it be intelligible before we inquire whether it be expedient."

He further said—

> "It is a dangerous and tricky system for Parliament to adopt—to encounter national dissatisfaction, if it really exists, with the assurance which may mean anything or nothing—which may, perhaps, conciliate the feeling of the people of Ireland for a moment and attract a passing breath of popularity, but which, when the day of trial comes, may be found entirely to fail. It is a method of proceeding which, whatever Party may be in power, or whatever measures may be adopted, I trust this House will never condescend to adopt."—(3 *Hansard*, [218] 131-2).

Well, Sir, when my right hon. Friend used those words, was it his intention that we were absolutely to exclude from our minds, in discussing Mr. Butt's Amendment, all details and particulars? How is it possible that we can discuss at length a plan, and say whether it is a good or a bad plan, unless we are allowed to discuss details and particulars, and unless we have some knowledge as to which of those details and particulars represent the fixed and settled opinion and judgment of the Government—to which they intend to adhere, and which are not to be left to the hazard of discussion in Committee? My right hon. Friend said the Committee stage of this Bill is not to be anticipated. I maintain that the essence of this question—whether it is wise or politic to grant a Legislative Body to Ireland?—lies in these details; and that unless we can see beforehand a good, intelligible, and satisfactory plan, no man among us will be entitled to say "Aye" to the Motion for the second reading of this Bill. Well, Sir, my right hon. Friend used much language of the same kind on the introduction of this Bill. He said he wanted no longer that we "should fence and skirmish with this question," but that we should "come to close quarters." But how are we to come to close quarters with this question unless we are allowed to discuss the details and particulars, and to know what are the main points of the plan of the Government to which they intend to adhere, and which are not subject to alteration in Committee? My right hon. Friend said a good deal to-night upon the question of the retention of the Irish representation in this House. He has hinted—I cannot say I entirely understand his proposal—he has hinted at, I believe, the outlines of certain proposals which the Government themselves intend to make. But, as I understood, the whole question of the retention of Irish representation in this House is one which is open to consideration in Committee. Well, now, let me point out one or two of the consequences which rest upon the decision to which the House may come upon this point of detail, as it was described the other day by my right hon. Friend. If the Irish Members are to be absolutely excluded from this House, it follows as a necessary consequence that a large measure of legislative independence must be conceded to the Irish Legislative Body and to the Irish Government. There must be in Ireland some kind of representative government, and there must be in Ireland some power of legislation, and if the Irish Members are excluded from this House it is clear that we cannot legislate for them here. Therefore, the necessary alternative is that we should allow them to legislate for themselves. But if this detail be settled the other way, if it be ultimately settled that the Irish representation is to be retained in this House, then there no longer arises this imminent necessity that the Irish Parliament should have complete power of legislation over every Irish matter. On the contrary, there arises a very strong presumption the other way; because if the Irish Members are present in this House—whether they come to discuss finance or anything else—I maintain it will be impossible that Irish questions should be excluded from discussion in this House; and thus two influences, acting possibly in opposite and contradictory ways, would be brought to bear on the Irish Government, and pressure might be applied to the Lord Lieutenant, and through him to the Irish Government, by a majority in this House, which is altogether opposed in political opinions to the majority of the Irish Legislature, to which the Irish Government would be responsible. Therefore, I say it is of first and cardinal importance that we should know, before we decide this question, whether Ireland is to have a Legislature competent to deal with all Irish matters; whether it is or is not proposed that Ireland is to retain a permanent, a temporary, a complete, or a limited representation within the walls of this House. We know very well, Sir, what are the causes which have induced the Government to give their benevolent consideration to the proposal that the Irish representation in this House should be retained. We know that my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) formulated his demands on this subject in a somewhat imperative fashion. We know that the fate of this Bill may not improbably depend upon the decision to which my right hon. Friend may come. Well, Sir, I do not know, I am not able to say, what effect upon my right hon. Friend's opinion the proposals announced to-night by Her Majesty's Government may have. I should doubt whether they would be such as to satisfy his requirements or to conciliate his opposition. What has been the main ground, as I understand it, of my right hon. Friend's demand that the Irish representation in this House should be retained? Why, because their exclusion was the clear, the palpable, the unanswerable proof, the outward and visible sign of the complete separation which is intended by this measure between Great Britain and Ireland. I do not understand my right hon. Friend to have made this demand as a complete and final satisfaction to all the alterations which he would require in this measure. He has made it as the indispensable preliminary for the further alterations which he thinks scarcely less necessary. He has told us what are the modifications which he thinks are required. He has told us that he would like to see a separate Legislative Body or Provincial Council, or whatever it may be called, granted to Ulster. He has told us that he would wish to see the complete control maintained over taxation retained in the hands of the Imperial Parliament; and he has told us that he would wish to see all the arrangements about the first and second Orders and the property qualification removed from the Irish Legislative Body. These are all necessary alterations which he considers would logically follow upon the retention of the Irish representation in Parliament. I am not sure whether in any case it would have been admitted that those alterations would logically have followed from these concessions; but I feel tolerably certain that no such alteration will follow from the extremely limited concession which my right hon. Friend has made to-night to the demands which have been put forward by my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham. The fact, as I understand it, is this—that although my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham has spoken of a federal arrangement, he has not departed in principle, or departed very far, from his original proposal of granting to Ireland a great municipality for the management of certain strictly specified objects, strictly limited and controlled by Parliament, and acting in subordination to, and under the control of, Parliament, and of a Government responsible to Parliament. That, Sir, I understand to be the form which my right hon. Friend would wish to give to this Bill. I cannot say that I have heard one word to-night from my right hon. Friend at the head of the Government which shows that he is in the slightest degree inclined to make any concessions to my right hon. Friend, or to those who agree with him, in this direction; and that although he intends, for certain specified exceptional and rare purposes, Irish Representatives may return to this House, yet that this complete and virtual separation of the two Legislatures and of the two Governments is to be as complete, if not even more complete, than when the Bill was originally introduced. It seems to me, if I rightly understood something that fell from my right hon. Friend to-night, that one of the new proposals goes far towards making the Irish Legislative Assembly a co-ordinate Assembly with the British Legislature. I understand that there is to be something in the nature of a Commission which is to report on foreign and other matters; that the two Houses are, through this Commission, to have the power of conferring with each other, and upon an Address from the Irish House the Irish Members may be invited over here to discuss Imperial matters.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE, interrupting, was understood to say that the noble Marquess was referring to an entirely distinct matter.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: Well, Sir, I will not discuss this matter, because I confess that I do not understand fully what the proposal was. I think it is unfortunate that a proposal which seems to me of very considerable importance, and which may have a very considerable effect on the opinions of many hon. Members in giving their vote on the second reading of this Bill, should be only before us in the form of a statement by my right hon. Friend, and that we should not have, and I suppose we cannot have, before the second reading of the Bill, a clear and definite statement in the form of clauses in the Bill to tell what are these actual proposals now going to be made. I must assume, after what we have heard to-night, that although this Bill is subject to large modifications in Committee, it is the intention of the Government that it should remain substantially in the form in which it was introduced. Well, then, perhaps I may say briefly what are some of the principal objections which I entertain to this Bill, and why I cannot give my support to it. In the first place, I should like to say, before I pass away altogether from that point, that it seems to me altogether erroneous to say, as my right hon. Friend said in his Manifesto the other day, and I think he repeated it to-night, that the sole principle which is contained in this Bill is the concession of autonomy to Ireland. Sir, I find in this measure other principles, or, at all events, provisions involving principles, which are of far greater importance than are contained in a dozen ordinary Bills. In the first place, there is an alteration in the constitution of Parliament. For all practical purposes, notwithstanding what we have been told to-day, the Imperial Parliament is henceforward to be representative of two Kingdoms instead of three. That is a principle of some importance. This Bill, for the first time, limits the authority of Parliament. Hitherto Parliament has been omnipotent—perhaps the expression is somewhat too wide—but we have been accustomed to consider Parliament omnipotent; and I believe, subject to the laws of nature and of its own will, there has, up to the present time, been no limitation upon the authority of Parliament. But this Bill, for the first time, will limit the authority of Parliament. The 37th clause in the Bill, under the guise of saving the Legislative power and authority of Parliament, virtually parts with a part of the power now possessed by Parliament. That clause says that the powers of Parliament shall be preserved, notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, in relation to all matters with which it is not competent for the Irish Parliament to deal. Therefore, inferentially, that clause lays down that with matters with which it is competent for the Irish Legislature to deal, it shall no longer be competent for the Imperial Parliament to deal. That is a new principle of some importance, and not a detail. Then, again, for the first time, a judicial authority is set up which will have power to take cognizance of, and pronounce an opinion on, the limits of Parliamentary authority. Constitutional questions are to be referred to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The Lord Lieutenant or the Secretary of State may refer such questions to the Privy Council. The Privy Council is to decide whether such a question is or is not within the competence of the Irish Legislative Body; and if it decides that it is so competent it will by the same decision decide that it is not Constitutionally within the competence of the Imperial Parliament. Sir, I say that these are enormous changes of principle, and changes of principle which may have a more far-reaching effect than even is contemplated by them as they are presented to us in this Bill. I will not attempt, I cannot attempt, to forecast what may be the future influence upon our Constitutional notions and Constitutional practice of the importation of innovations such as these; but I say, at all events, they are not details; they are principles which the House ought to bear in mind, and ought to have clearly before it, previous to giving its assent to an abstract Resolution affirming, in the opinion of my right hon. Friend, only the principle that Ireland ought to have some control over its own affairs. I should like to state one or two objections to the Bill. I maintain that the cardinal principle laid down by my right hon. Friend—the maintenance of the unity of the Empire—is not secured by this Bill. I think, Sir, it would be an error to suppose that the unity of the Empire is maintained if it presents a united front in foreign policy, if it is represented by a united Navy and a united Army. As far as external matters go, and as far as our relations with other States and nations are concerned, we may be able to preserve the semblance of unity after this Bill is passed; but, as far as our internal position goes, I say that with the passing of this Bill the unity of the Empire will have disappeared. We may have not only different laws in Ireland from those which prevail in England and Scotland; but laws founded on totally different principles, and administered in a totally different spirit. And I say that is no extravagant supposition. If the principles recently preached by the Irish Land League and the Irish National League be translated into legislation by the Irish Parliament, and if laws founded on those principles be administered by those who have had control over the National League, then we shall find in Ireland a state of law relating to property, liberty, and security of life which will be of an altogether different character to that prevailing in this country. Can it be said that the unity of the Empire is maintained when an Englishman, going from England to Ireland, or an Irishman remaining in Ireland, finds himself subject to a code of laws administered in a totally different spirit from that which prevails in the rest of the Empire? And, in my opinion, it would be no exaggeration to suppose that it would be perfectly possible, if this Bill is passed, for an Englishman to emigrate to the United States of America and find himself in a condition of things less altered in all that relate to his Government, and to the laws under which he lived, than if he transferred his domicile from England and Scotland to the newly-created Kingdom of Ireland. I maintain that no adequate safeguards have been provided for the minority. That is a point on which my right hon. Friend dwelt in his introductory speech. He told us who those were for whom protection was required. There were the Ulster Protestants, the landlords, and the Civil servants. I think the Ulster Protestants have had but cold comfort offered to them. They have been told that various suggestions have been made which shall receive in Committee full consideration; but none of which have assumed so practical a shape as to be worthy of attention, or worthy of adoption, by the Government; and the Ulster Protestants are given to understand that if somebody cannot put these suggestions into a more practical shape than the Government have been able to do, they must be left to take their chance. Then the landlords are to be provided for, if the Land Purchase Bill passes, by being bought out. We have had significant hints regarding the Irish landlords. We have been told that "The sands are running out," and that as yet the Irish landlords have made no sign; and it would seem that unless the Irish landlords can discover some Constitutional means by which they are to express their gratitude for being, in the first place, compelled to become exiles from their native country, and, in the second place, compelled to receive only about half the income to which they are now legally entitled—unless they can find some Constitutional means of expressing gratitude for these boons, it appears that they also will have to go without any compensation at all. We will assume that the landlords are bought out, and the Civil servants pensioned off. There will still be a large minority behind in Ireland, exclusive altogether of the minority we have in Ulster, who will be rendered the more helpless by the departure of the landlords and of the Civil servants. There will be all those who have done service to these obnoxious classes, who have in times past done what they thought good service, as the right hon. Gentleman says, to the maintenance of law and order; men who have acted as jurymen, and have done their duty; men who have acted as independent witnesses; men who, in one capacity or another, have made themselves obnoxious to what will become the dominant power in Ireland; and for this minority, rendered more helpless by the departure of those to whom they would have a right to look for assistance, no protection whatever is provided. I recognize, I admit, that the provisions respecting the constitution of the Irish Legislative Body were probably devised with the honest intention of giving what protection could be given to this minority. But how have these provisions been received? How many of the Members who have intimated their intention to vote for the second reading of this Bill have expressed their intention to abide by such provisions? And if these provisions were passed into law, I must confess that they appear to me, however honestly intended, to be far more likely to produce a deadlock and confusion in the Irish Parliament and the Irish administration than to answer the purposes for which they were intended—namely, of giving adequate security to the minority. Can we doubt that if there was this deadlock and confusion lasting for a few years an agitation would arise—and probably a successful agitation—for the abolition and removal of these restrictions, and for the abolition of the last provision in this Bill, which is intended for the protection of any Irish minority? My right hon. Friend suggested in his Manifesto the other day the possible extension of this measure to Scotland, and he spoke of some who viewed this proposal with horror. I do not know whether he referred to anything I said on this subject. I certainly have never said one word to show that I am in the slightest degree disinclined to give a large measure, and a liberal measure, of local self-government to the people of Scotland, if they wish it. What I have endeavoured to point out is this—that if this measure is founded on sound principles, it ought to be one capable of being applied to Scotland. And I have pointed out that if it was proposed to extend this measure to Scotland, the people of Scotland would scout and reject it; and I have attempted to show that it is extremely likely that the Irish people would in a short time be as dissatisfied with the measure as the Scotch people would be at the very first, and that this measure is not therefore likely to be any final solution. But my right hon. Friend says in his Manifesto that if the Scottish question were raised, it would be debated upon its own merits, and without reference to any of the painful considerations which have been dragged into this controversy as regards Ireland. My right hon. Friend says—

> "If the case of Scotland is discussed, it will be done without the painful and disparaging circumstances of controversy with which we are now threatened in the case of Ireland, whose woeful history for centuries emboldens some of us to treat her as if she had but a limited share in the great inheritance of human right, and none at all in the ordinary privilege of immunity from gross and wholesale insult—emboldens, I say, some of us, but only some of us, and not, I rejoice to think, the nations of Scotland or of England."

I do not know who "some of us" are

to whom my right hon. Friend refers. I suppose that he refers to what he termed the representatives of class. I may be included—I probably am included—among those representatives of class whose evidence is discredited evidence, whose opinion upon this subject is not worth having; but I shall not be debarred, nevertheless, from expressing my opinion of the character, the political antecedents, and the political record of the men whom we are now told are the Representatives of the vast majority of the people of Ireland, and to whose hands will be intrusted, if this Bill should pass, the future destinies of Ireland. I shall call as a witness no discredited representative of class; but I will call as a witness my right hon. Friend himself, and shall quote his words used five years ago, in 1881, when my right hon. Friend was then, as now, the Leader of the "upright sense of the nation." What was the description which he gave then of the political Party which we are now told by him is representative of the great majority of the people of Ireland? The passage to which I refer has been often quoted; but as it is important in this connection I will read it to the House. My right hon. Friend, speaking at Leeds in 1881, said—

> "For nearly the first time in the history of Christendom a body—a small body—of men has arisen who are not ashamed to preach in Ireland the doctrines of public plunder. I make that charge advisedly in the situation which I hold, and I shall ask you to judge with me whether it is not wrung from me by demonstrative evidence and by the hard necessity of the case."

My right hon. Friend then contrasted the policy and the principles of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) with those of Mr. O'Connell, and drew a distinction between them on five points. He said—

> "Mr. O'Connell professed his unconditional and unswerving loyalty to the Crown of England. Mr. Parnell says if the Crown of England is to be the link between the two countries it must be the only link; but whether it is to be the link at all—I am not now quoting his words—is a matter on which, I believe, he has given no opinion whatever. O'Connell desired friendly relations with the people of this country—cordial and hearty friendship. What does Mr. Parnell desire? He says the Irish people must make manufactures of their own in order that they may buy nothing in England. . . . Friendship with England was the motto of O'Connell, who on every occasion declared his respect for property, and, as far as I know, he consistently maintained it; but what says Mr. Parnell upon that subject? . . . . Now that the Land Act has passed, and now that he is afraid lest the people of England by their long-continued efforts should win the hearts of the whole Irish nation, Mr. Parnell has a new and an enlarged gospel of plunder to proclaim. He says now that whereas the rental of Ireland is £17,000,000 the landlord is entitled to nothing but the original value of the land before the spade was put into it; and that the rental he may justly claim is not £17,000,000, but possibly about £3,000,000. And I ask you, gentlemen, as honest men, not as politicians, not as Liberals, not in any other capacity—I ask you whether it is possible to describe proceedings of that kind in any other words more just or accurate than as the promulgation of the gospel of sheer plunder. The next of the five points was respect for law and human life. On this I think O'Connell was consistent; and I believe he was unimpeachable. Mr. Parnell is somewhat copious in his references to America. He seems to set up America as the true and only friend of Ireland; but in all his references to America he has never found time to utter one word of disapproval or misgiving about what is known as the assassination literature of that country. Not American literature; no, there is not an American who does not scorn it, and spurn it and loathe it, as you do. But there are, it is sad to say, a knot of Irishmen who are not ashamed to point out in the Press which they maintain how the ships in Her Majesty's Navy ought to be blown into the air to destroy the power of England by secret treachery, and how gentlemen that they are pleased to select ought to be made the object of the knife of the assassin and deprived of life because they do not conform to the new Irish gospel."

Well, Sir, that was the description given five years ago—it may be said a long time ago—of that party, the small party of the hon. Member for Cork at that time. I want to know which of the doctrines that were held by the hon. Member for Cork at that time, and which were thus denounced by my right hon. Friend, have been ever renounced or repudiated by the hon. Gentleman or by his Party in this House? I do not know that they have been verbally repudiated. I want to know whether there is any visible sign that they have been practically repudiated? Is there any difference—any essential or practical difference—in the methods and procedure of the National League from the methods and procedure of the Land League, which was thus spoken of by my right hon. Friend then? As far as I can see, the description given of the policy of that Party then is not materially altered in any respect now, except that the description then given was the description of that small Party which it might then have been reasonably contended did not represent any large proportion of the Irish people; but it is now a large Party, which it is asserted does represent the vast majority of the inhabitants of Ireland. Well, what was the course, what was the advice, what was the policy of my right hon. Friend at that time in reference to that state of circumstances? My right hon. Friend said—

> "But if, when we have that short further experience to which I have referred, it shall then appear that there is still to be fought a final conflict in Ireland between law on the one side and sheer lawlessness on the other; if the law purged from defect and from any taint of injustice is still to be repelled and refused, and the first conditions of political society are to be set at naught, then I say, gentlemen, without any hesitation, the resources of civilization against its enemies are not yet exhausted."

That was the policy which my right hon. Friend recommended then, and which I venture to recommend now. If this war—this final conflict between law on the one side and sheer lawlessness on the other—is to continue, that is the policy which I venture to recommend still, but for recommending which I and my Friends are called the representatives of class. I forget what the other epithet which my right hon. Friend applied was. [An hon. MEMBER: Dependents.] But these, we are told, are now the principles held by the representatives of class. Well, Sir, my right hon. Friend concluded that speech by saying—

> "I, for one, in that state of facts relying upon my fellow-countrymen in these three nations associated together, have not a doubt of the result."

I wish that I could say the same now. I wish there was not a doubt as to the result of the policy which my right hon. Friend then recommended. But, Sir, I say that the circumstances which were then described by my right hon. Friend are not materially or substantially altered; and, therefore, in my opinion, the policy my right hon. Friend then recommended, founded on that state of facts, ought not to be substantially altered either. I see no reason, simply because the Party professing those principles has acquired greater strength and possibly a greater claim to represent a larger number of the people of Ireland—I see no reason why we are to retire from that which has been called by my right hon. Friend a conflict between law on the one side and sheer lawlessness on the other, and why are we to sacrifice, without any further struggle, the principles upon which, in the opinion of my right hon. Friend at that time, the structure and basis of society reposed. Sir, it is for these reasons, only a few of which I have thus imperfectly been permitted to give to the House, that I, believing that this measure is fraught with mischief and disaster both to this country and to Ireland, now beg to move, as an Amendment to the Motion which you have put from the Chair, that this Bill be read a second time this day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*The Marquess of Hartington.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.): Mr. Speaker, I think that most of us on these Benches are disposed, to a great extent, to regard the opposition of the noble Marquess as a manly and a straightforward opposition. To a politician of his temperament it seems natural that apprehensions such as he seems to entertain should occur; but we cannot forget that very much the same kind of apprehension and anxiety weighed upon the noble Marquess in reference to other Irish reforms; and notably in regard to so recent a reform as the extension of the franchise and the retention of the full complement of Irish Members in this House; and we cannot forget that his doubts on these matters did not prevail even with himself, to prevent the passing, and I think all will now admit the happy passing, of these reforms. I do not know that there is a single Irish reform of this century as to which doubts just as grave, and terrors just as great, as those which seem to oppress the noble Marquess have not prevailed. But the great question is this—Will any man in this House, will even the noble Marquess himself, stand up here and declare, in the face of the House and of the country, that any of these Irish reforms, which so terrified people when they were being passed, should be recalled, that any of these measures should be repealed? I do not intend to follow the noble Marquess through the somewhat irritating topics that he has touched upon. We are determined to see, once for all, whether there is a chance of having peace, and putting an end, if it is possible to put an end, to this accursed feud between the Irish and the English people. If trouble and exasperation should come again, we are determined that, at all events, it is not on our side the responsibility shall lie, and it will be a heavy responsibility on whosoever it shall lie. The noble Marquess has quoted what the Prime Minister said five years, and he also made a quotation—I believe an inaccurate and unfounded one—from a speech delivered by my hon. Friend the Member for Cork, quotations all intended to show that up to a comparatively recent period the Irish people were not particularly well affected towards English rule, and that hard things were said. Well, hard things were said; but they were said and done on both sides. I do not know what object there can be in reviving them by these quotations. I think if we were to go digging into the grave of the past we might possibly retort, and retort even more successfully in raking up unpleasant memories. After all, where is this kind of thing to end? What chance is there of this great controversy ever being settled if we go over old battles and bandy about stale quotations over and over again? I think I can speak for myself and for the others who sit by me when I say that the noble Marquess and his Friends may spare the House those quotations. I, for one, admit in the fullest manner that, until I learned something of the temper of this new Parliament, until this great measure appeared on the horizon, that I worked with all my might and all my heart against English rule in Ireland; and I must candidly say that my only regret was that my ability and my capacity and my power in the matter were so exceedingly limited. I do not think there ought to be any difficulty about our admitting that. But the question, after all, is not what we said and what we did then, or what we said of others or what others said of us, but what we say and what we do now, or rather what the Irish people will feel and say if, by a free vote and a free gift of the people of Great Britain, the Irish people are made rulers in their own land, where for many a day they have been outcasts or slaves of hon. Gentlemen, some of them above the Gangway, and their friends in Ireland. I hold that this is, after all, the great question. I candidly admit that the state of feeling up to the present between the two countries was about as bad as it possibly could be. Why, the state of feeling in Ireland is the reason why we are discussing this Bill, and I say the worse the feeling is at present the greater the justification for the Bill; and it will be the glory of the Bill if it should succeed in removing that feeling, and in replacing and converting the present rancour and passion into feelings of friendliness and goodwill. The question is, will it succeed in doing that? for I take it for granted that if Englishmen could really persuade themselves that this Bill would satisfy Ireland and cure Irish discontent the objections of three-fourths of reasonable Englishmen—even the noble Marquess himself—would vanish and fall to the ground. I do not suppose that anybody would for a moment contend, for instance, that if the people of Scotland wanted a Parliament they could not have it. I do not believe there is any Colony in the Empire that could not have for the asking that Parliament the Irish people have so long and so passionately been asking for. The Prime Minister has quoted to-night the words of a distinguished Irishman—Sir Charles Gavan Duffy—with regard to Canada. Canada was disloyal when refused Home Rule; but she was friendly and loyal because she was granted Home Rule. Well, I think the same thing may be said of Ireland. Of course, it is a very serious and a very grave question whether this measure, as it stands, will be a completely successful one. We are not here to offer you any exaggerated assurance on that subject. We cannot, of course, lay open the future. We cannot forecast the future, and make you certain of what will come to pass. There is no doubt that a certain risk will have to be taken; but have you been taking no risks in the past, and will you be taking no risks if you should reject this measure? I am sure the House will not misunderstand what I say. It is very much the habit to misunderstand and pervert our opinions, even if they are put in the very plainest and frankest language we can command. I do not think I need say that in speaking of risks I do not mean dynamite. I do not suppose you put us so low as to suggest that, or that your courage is at so low an ebb that would pay any attention to miserable risks of the kind. I speak of the risk of having ever at your door a discontented, a coerced, and an exasperated Irish people, struggling for what your greatest statesman labours to accomplish, and for which he has pledged his reputation to be her right. As I have said, we do not pretend to dive into the future; but short of doing that, short of something like a revelation from Heaven, I ask any reasonable Englishman what proof he can demand that he has not got, seeing that this Bill is accepted by the Irish Representatives, by the Irish people, aye, and by the Irish race throughout the globe, accepted, as at all events embodying upon the whole a Treaty of Peace between the two countries—a Treaty of Peace that can and will be loyally and honestly stuck to by them. I would ask you what topic has ever been started, what question raised upon which any people have ever been so heartily united, so marvellously unanimous as the Irish people were on this question? If men are determined to disbelieve us, then there is an end of the matter—if you believe that 20,000,000 or so of us have entered into a conspiracy of lying and hypocrisy, why of course there is an end of the matter. But I ask Englishmen, what evidence have you in Irish history, or, indeed, in the history of the Representatives of Ireland, as long as Ireland has had real representation in this House—when did they ever conceal their opinion of you, or where? Certainly I am under the impression that our weakness is rather in the opposite direction. We have been often enough charged with violence of language, brutality of language, and a great many other things. I will not go back upon these subjects now, I will not even say whether these taunts have been just or unjust; but I do say we have never been charged with want of candour to you. Yes, my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) and his Party in this House have represented the Irish difficulty in all its extent, and breadth, and depth. That is what brings us here—that is our pride and our strength. It was your advantage so long as you were dealing with us as enemies, and it is so now that you are dealing with us as friends. It is our advantage too. You know, in dealing with the hon. Member for Cork, that you deal with the Representatives of the whole Irish race throughout the world. We have never said a more extreme thing in Ireland than we have said to your faces in this House; and, on the other hand, there is not an extreme assemblage of Irishmen throughout the world to whom we would be in dread to repeat what we say here to-night. The Irish people are as eager as you can be to have an end to this miserable and everlasting quarrel; and we believe that this Bill offers us a means of ending this quarrel upon terms that will not harm you and which do no dishonour to our cause. We believe that, Sir. Of course, I have no doubt that attempts will be made—as attempts have been made—to manipulate and torture the expressions of individual Irishmen and some of our own Members who expressed themselves not altogether satisfied with the Bill. But the hon. Member for Cork told you so himself the first night he opened his mouth on the subject—the Bill is not a Jove-born goddess sprung perfect from the brain of the Prime Minister. It does not pretend to be without failing or fault, or to satisfy everyone. We intend to fight as strongly as we can, and to protest against some of its details. Why do we protest? Why should we try as hard as we can to amend parts of the measure? It is simply because we mean to accept it, and to work it loyally. If there was any Machiavellian motive at work Irishmen would hold their tongues about the defects of the Bill instead of criticizing it. They would swallow everything—they would bind themselves to every clause and line of the Bill. But is that the sort of assent that Englishmen want from intelligent men to this Bill? What is the heart and essence of this Treaty of Peace between the two countries? Is it that the Irish people shall pay an Imperial contribution of so many hundred thousands more or less—that the Irish Parliament should have the power of dealing with this or that particular subject? Is it that we shall come here or not? No. What we want is not an absolute guarantee that in every particular this or that detail shall or shall not be fixed or unchangeable—this is not a measure like the Laws of the Medes and Persians—for there is a provision for revision. No; the heart and the marrow of the Bill is that it shall be accepted in a spirit of honesty and of loyalty and of goodwill to this Empire. The essence of its successful working is that the Irish Parliament of the future—that its relations to this Empire shall be relations of friendship and cordiality and peace, instead of being relations, as they have been and are now, of deep and sullen resentment. I believe that that is the spirit in which the Bill is accepted; and if that is the spirit in which it is worked, the English people will receive without the least alarm and with every sort of goodwill any proposals to give more enlarged effect to the system of Local Government in Ireland, and the goodwill of the two countries may determine our course. That is what we have to look to. We are not here splitting straws. If we could not see our way honestly to accept this Bill, honestly as a settlement of the question, we would say so to you; aye, and if we did not say it the Irish people would say it in spite of us, and I promise you you would not have the least reason to mistake them for an instant. The question after all is one whether you will trust us and believe us? We do not for an instant pretend that this Bill will satisfy every man of the Irish race. I may say that O'Donovan Rossa, for instance, is discontented with the Bill, and we do not hope altogether to conquer his objection. We do not even promise that by any incantation you can eradicate feelings the growth of many a sad year and many a sad century. We do not believe anything of the kind. It will take a long time completely to eradicate these feelings; but see what has occurred in the case of Earl Spencer. Now, Sir, I admit, and perhaps nobody has better reason to admit it than I have, that we sadly misapprehended Earl Spencer in Ireland. [*Ironical Tory cheers.*] Well, I trust hon. Members may make their own comment on that; but I believe that Earl Spencer was the first to acknowledge that the misunderstanding was not altogether on the one side. At all events, he has to thank the unfortunate system of the government you sent him over to administer, and the sort of officials he had around him there. I say this, and I say it from my heart, that the mistakes he made were mistakes that belong to the system; but certainly the manliness with which he has acknowledged them belongs altogether to himself, and not to the system. What has happened in the case of Earl Spencer? One touch of kindliness in one speech at Newcastle has effaced and obliterated years of bitter memories from the hearts of Irishmen; and the speeches of the Prime Minister in this House and the kindly English feeling shown in this House, and, I am glad to say, out of it, Sir, these things have done more than 50 Coercion Acts could do—have done more to bring about a union, a real union, a union of sympathy and of generosity and respect between the two countries. Well, Sir, I ask you is that a people so hopeless to conciliate? Are you afraid to go on in that path both of conciliation and of trust; or are you less afraid to plunge back again into that miserable, dismal labyrinth of repression and anger and wretchedness which has left you and the Irish people where they stand to-day? I cannot pretend to gauge the effect all at once of the propositions which the Prime Minister has laid before the House to-night with respect to the question of the exclusion or retention of the Irish Members in this House; but I shall humbly say this—that in so far as they seem to promise that there shall be, at all events, no immediate and no enforced retention of the Representatives of Ireland away from their own country in this Parliament, in so far I most solemnly believe that his views are views recommended in the interests of lasting peace and union. The noble Marquess has, like many other opponents of this Bill, shown some concern for our dignity and our feelings in this matter. Of course, we are very much touched by that. But so far as our feelings are concerned, the noble Marquess and his Friends may be quite content to let us take care of ourselves. So far as we are concerned, we are disposed to think our rights are sufficiently guarded by the provisions to which the Prime Minister alluded. So far as we ourselves are concerned, if we entertained the sinister and Machiavellian views and designs that hon. Gentlemen sometimes affect to pretend to think we hold, we would stick to that representation. We would keep our people's eyes fixed upon you here as the persons responsible for anything that might go wrong in Ireland. We would keep our grip of this place and use our power here to distract your councils and wring further concessions. That would obviously be the policy. And it would be the advantage of my hon. Friend the Member for Cork if he had those dark and sinister designs. That is not his policy—he has no such designs. He is ready and willing to take upon his own shoulders the whole duty and responsibility of governing and satisfying Ireland. He is anxious that his whole energies, and the energies of my hon. Friends and the Representatives in the new Parliament, should be devoted entirely to that task—and it is a task almost for a Hercules—of building up the resources and happiness of our unfortunate people, and of pulling up for ages of misery and neglect. If he fails the Irish people will not reproach you. We believe that he will not fail. We believe, at all events, that that will be a sufficiently onerous and honourable task to occupy all the energies of the Irish Members. In other years, when a happier spirit reigns between the two countries, if you should desire the participation of Irishmen in the Government of the Empire, or if Irishmen themselves should desire it, as they possibly might, you would then be glad to have some of my hon. Friends coming back here as your friends and equals. I believe you would then find them to be a greater strength to your Empire than ever they are likely to be so long as you retain them here against their will for the purpose of humiliating the Irish people. Sir, the noble Marquess dwelt once more upon the woes in the future of the loyal minority. Well, Sir, we on these Benches candidly are not inclined to take altogether seriously the opposition of some of those Gentlemen from the North-East of Ulster. To my mind, instead of depriving them of any power they possess at this moment, this Bill proposes to confer upon them power of the most enormous character.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: Hear, hear!

Mr. WILLIAM O'BRIEN: Power which they have lost, and which by no earthly possibility can they hope to recover without this Bill.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: Hear, hear!

Mr. WILLIAM O'BRIEN: Where is their power in Ireland at this moment? It is lost.

Mr. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): No.

Mr. WILLIAM O'BRIEN: The hon. Member who says "No" is somewhat of a Mark Tapley. Is that hon. Member enamoured of the present position of his class? Is he hopeful of its prospects if this Bill should be wrecked through the folly of his class? I say those men are at present perfectly helpless and perfectly hopeless. As to another power in this House, all I can say is it is not so apparent to us as it seems to themselves. Such of us as were in the last Parliament remember the attention that was paid to their views upon the Redistribution of Seats, for instance, by the Chiefs of their own Tory Party. We remember what short shrift they used to receive from the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), who is now ready to "rush to glory or the grave." The ablest lieutenant of that noble Lord called them a set of "reactionary Ulster Tories." That was when they were about double their present number in this House. I confess I find it extremely difficult to believe that these Gentlemen can feel so very acutely being obliged or invited to exchange their position of helplessness, and I will not say of insignificance, but, at all events, of want of appreciation, in this House, for the position of forming more than one-third of the entire Legislature of their own country, in which, according to this Bill, they would almost have a veto upon all legislation they did not like. In fact, it is possible that, with 103 Representatives of property and 32 Representatives of the Orange Democracy, an Irish Conservative who would be willing to become an Irishman, and who was endowed with a reasonable amount of brains, and who possessed a reasonable capacity for framing a moderate and Conservative national policy, might yet oust my hon. Friend the Member for Cork from the Leadership in the Irish House of Commons. Sir, we do not object to all the power that is being given these men. We recognize that a great number of our Protestant fellow-countrymen are estranged from us by bitter memories and misunderstandings, and through causes which were not of our making, which it is perfectly evident every consideration of policy as well as of patriotism would induce us to remove. Sir, we do not forget our Protestant Volunteers in Ireland. We do not forget our Protestant Parliament—and our Parliament it was, although it was exclusively Protestant. If Irish Protestantism never did anything for us but produce our Leader—the Leader of the Irish race—I can hardly argue it with patience—everybody knows that the Irish Catholic who would be a bigot or a persecutor would be hooted out of any assembly of Catholics. Some of us can speak with some slight authority on behalf of the Protestant democracy of Ireland. My hon. Friend sitting below me (Mr. Jordan) is one of those persecuted Protestants whom his fellow-countrymen elected for one of the most Catholic constituencies in all Ireland by a majority of 7,000. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for South Derry (Mr. T. M. Healy) and myself are proud to acknowledge that we owe our seats to the votes of Protestants and Presbyterians; and although our tenure is supposed to be precarious, I will have very little hesitation in going back to the masses of honest, industrious Protestant farmers in South Tyrone, and asking them to find in the provisions of this Bill more comfort and consolation than they are likely to find in the alternative policy of rushing to "glory or the grave." Sir, we do not grudge our Protestant fellow-countrymen every safeguard and every security which can be given them. We are not afraid of their having the most ample power in our Irish Parliament. We are bound by dear and sacred ties to our Protestant fellow-countrymen. In spite of what is said in this House, our country is one country. The race which gave us Grattan and Emmett, and Davitt, and Butt, and Parnell, is not a foreign race. I venture to say time will yet show that they and we understand one another better than this House is likely to understand either. We shall object to the money-bag qualification for the first Order, although it is exaggerated. I do not think we shall object to the special franchise. We do not object to the utterly disproportionate representation of the propertied classes; because we recognize that this Bill, instead of being a measure for the dislocation of society, is, in reality, to my mind, a most marvellous plan for re-creating society out of its ruins almost in Ireland—aye, and of giving to a caste that is fallen and helpless such a chance as it never had before, and never could have anticipated, and, I must say, such as it scarcely deserves. Still it opens to them the door, if they have not the folly and madness to reject the offer of becoming once more men of weight and influence in their own country. If I have not trespassed too long on the attention of the House, I would wish to say something on the speech of the Prime Minister; but really, under the present circumstances, it would be impossible to do anything but praise the Prime Minister. Perhaps the House will allow me to recall the fact that there was just one occasion during the bitter conflicts of the last five years when I felt at liberty to give my own humble opinion of the Prime Minister personally, as divorced from his administration in Ireland. It was just after the right hon. Gentleman had carried a Resolution temporarily exiling me from this House. I hope he can look back upon the circumstance with as much equanimity as I can. On that occasion, addressing a meeting of 100,000 people in the Phœnix Park, I spoke with as much warmth as any Irish Member feels to-day regarding the Prime Minister. We are not mere worshippers of success. My Friends will bear me out that most of the men who have embraced the career of Irish nationality did so with the knowledge that it is a heart-breaking business. I do not know what the fate of his Bill is going to be; but this I do say—that whatever may be its fate, and whatever conflicts may have to come—and in spite of all we are not in the least tired of the struggle, if the struggle is to come again—aye, and even if we were tired, there are others, and others, and others who should take it up. This much, however, I do say—that I believe as long as the Irish name remains Irishmen will remember with gratitude and affection the great measure of liberty and of peace to which the right hon. Gentleman has devoted the glorious sunset of his genius and his days.

Mr. HOARE (Norwich) said, he would crave that indulgence of hon. Members of the House which he knew was never asked for in vain by an hon. Member addressing them for the first time. He would not have ventured to take up the time of the House were it not that he felt that during the discussion of these

Irish questions the agriculturists of East Anglia, of which the town he had the honour to represent was, perhaps, the Metropolis, had long expressed a decided opinion upon the questions now before the House, and he should be sorry to have it supposed they took other than the deepest interest in this great subject. He was sure that if Home Rule could in any way bring justice, and by justice prosperity, to Ireland and to this great Empire, the people of the agricultural districts would look upon it in a very different light from that in which they looked upon it now. They had to consider, if this measure was carried out, in what manner and to what class it would bring prosperity and so-called justice. In Ireland, it had been rightly said, there were almost two nations; and they need scarcely for a moment consider whether it would bring any advantages or so-called justice to the Loyal minority who had struggled so long in Ireland to keep the Union intact. There was no demand among the Loyal minority in Ireland for this measure. On the contrary, from all sides they had Petitions from that minority having an opposite object—Petitions telling them that if Home Rule was granted Ireland the most serious consequences would result to the Loyal minority, to the trade of Ireland, and to the Protestant religion in Ireland. They could not, therefore, feel that such a Bill would be of advantage to the minority he referred to. Would it, then, be of advantage to, and would it be received as a *finale* by, the rest of Ireland, by the majority who had agitated for it and brought about the present discussion? It would ill become him to criticize the Bill that they had now before them after the eloquent and exhaustive speech that had been made by the noble Marquess the Member for the Rossendale Division of Lancashire (the Marquess of Hartington), and it would be unnecessary for him to say anything as to its position. So young a Member as he was might well hesitate to criticize schemes which it was almost impossible for the House to understand at present, or, at any rate, to realize what those schemes really were. But was it possible that the majority in Ireland would receive this measure as a *finale?* He felt sure that if justice was being done by this measure —if the rights of Her Majesty's subjects were being protected—the House would not hesitate to meet any difficulty, however great, or incur any expense, if a measure of this kind could be properly carried out. In spite of what hon. Members below the Gangway might say, he had reasons for feeling satisfied and confident that the measure would not, and could not, possibly satisfy the aspirations of the Irish Nationalist Party. If it satisfied hon. Members in that House, it certainly did not satisfy other Irishmen, who freely gave expression to their opinions both in America and in England, some of whom treated the Bill as the breakfast or opening meal, while others regarded it as a first instalment, declaring that Ireland would not stop in her demands till she got all she required. If any attempt was made to work this Bill, the Government would be met with difficulties that would necessarily produce irritation as between Ireland and Great Britain. The one particular point as to not having the entire disposal of their finance — he meant the idea so eloquently expressed by the Prime Minister, of the money passing through the throat of some English official — seemed in itself a point that must, in the natural course of events, lead to considerable irritation as between Ireland and Great Britain. He felt, too, that the position of the Irish in the Empire would materially and most seriously suffer if this measure of Home Rule was carried out. They had been told that one reason why Irishmen did not accept the laws made by the Imperial Parliament was that they came to them in a foreign garb. He must express his regret that they should consider this question of Ireland as being in any manner in an alien garb. In the Government Offices, in the Army and the Navy, in commerce and in agriculture, they were in the habit of mixing with the Irish people; but instead of regarding them as aliens they treated them as fellow-subjects with themselves of this great Empire. If, however, Home Rule were granted, the working classes especially might, when they saw Irishmen coming to compete with them in these times of depression, be only too ready to receive them as coming in an alien garb. If we began to dismember our Empire the consequences must be serious and fatal. Some hon. Members had aspirations, perhaps high ones, with respect to the confederation of our Colonies and Dependencies with the Mother Country; and it might have been hoped that the great occasion of the opening of the Colonial Exhibition by the Queen the other day could be regarded as the commencement of that great work. But he feared the Colonies would not care to join in such scheme of federation if the United Kingdom was first to be broken up, as it would be, by this measure, and still less if it was to be further broken up by the subsequent passing of a similar measure in regard to Scotland. He should expect that, under the circumstances, the Colonies would hold aloof; for they would feel that if we could not keep our own kith and kin together we could not be expected to keep our Colonies, which were at so great a distance from us, together. The Prime Minister, in opening the discussion on this question, quoted with all reverence words from Holy Writ, and exhorted them to walk by faith rather than by sight. To-day the right hon. Gentleman took a somewhat different line, for he said that with the knowledge of events now before them they could judge for themselves. For his own part, he thought the time had arrived when, in dealing with Ireland, they had better walk by sight. They had walked by faith when they dealt with the Established Church of Ireland and the Land Question; but they might feel that they could walk by sight now. They had knowledge enough now to enable them to judge whether in granting Home Rule they would be giving peace and prosperity to Ireland. A Paper had lately been circulated which he considered was, in itself, convincing proof of what the feeling in Ireland of a large proportion of the population must be in reference to this Bill. The First Lord of the Treasury having asked for the free communication of the views of the people of Ireland, a large correspondence had been received and published; and it was extremely interesting to look through it, for there was scarcely a single extract in favour of Home Rule. He concluded from this that there must be a second volume to be issued by the Prime Minister, and that the right hon. Gentleman had reserved the favourable extracts for that volume. Another point of the Prime Minister's was that there were two roads—one, they were told, would bring peace and happiness to Ireland, whilst it was said the other road would lead to all manner of evils; and it was sought to frighten them from taking that road by threats made use of by the Chief Secretary for Ireland and other right hon. and hon. Gentlemen. Well, they might meet with dangers and risks by taking that road; but, for his (Mr. Hoare's) part, he was not afraid of the dangers and risks. He would take the road which he believed to be the right one—the road of duty—which they knew was not always the smoothest or the most pleasant for the time being. The hon. Member below the Gangway who had just sat down (Mr. W. O'Brien) said Ireland was one country—a united country. Well, he (Mr. Hoare) wished this Empire to be one and united. He wished to prevent the weakening and breaking up of the British Empire, because he was convinced it would not only be disastrous to this country, but to Ireland; and because he believed that by such disruption the whole civilized world must suffer. In the previous debate on this question the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had quoted an old nursery rhyme about "Ifs and Ands," which was scarcely appropriate to the solemnity of a debate on such a very grave and important question. He would not follow the right hon. Gentleman in the tone of his remarks; but he would conclude with a quotation from an old English author, which he considered more appropriate to the subject—

> "Oh, if you rear this house against this house,
> It will the woefullest division prove,
> That ever fell upon this cursed earth;
> Prevent, resist it, let it not be so,
> Lest child, child's children cry against you—
> woe!"

Mr. B. FLETCHER (Wilts, Chippenham) said, he thought it must be clear that the proposals of the noble Lord the Member for the Rossendale Division of Lancashire (the Marquess of Hartington) were unacceptable to the Members who certainly represented Ireland. Therefore, they were thrown back on this position. They had no proposals which were acceptable to the Irish Members; and, consequently, either the present Bill must be read a second time, or the policy of the Members of the Opposition must be the policy of the future. He thought that was not a policy which could commend itself to the House. When he was before his constituents this subject was much discussed, and at some 30 large meetings which he attended he was asked what his views were with regard to the future of Ireland. The scheme he propounded was very simple. It was that we should give local government to Ireland, and also to England, Scotland, and Wales, and that Members of Parliament, after transacting the local business of their respective countries in various large towns, should meet together at Westminster for Imperial work alone. The Conservative Press was good enough to tell him he had better attend to his Profession and not endeavour to make laws for nations. His scheme, he might observe, would lead up to the federation of our Colonies. It was most desirable, in dealing with so great a question, to make the measure so complete as to give reasonable expectation that it would form a final settlement. Nothing was easier than destructive criticism. He remembered, when it was proposed to enable dividend warrants to be sent by post, the Bank of England raised 84 or 86 objections; but when the Government of the day said the thing was to be done all those objections disappeared. The longer the Bill was before the country the more certain was it to be accepted as an adequate and final setting to rest of the Irish problem. Conservative Members ought to welcome the removal of Irish Members from the House, as that would be a return to the state of things existing in former days. There was no ground for assuming that the Irish Parliament would show a hostile spirit to this country, as they would be acting under a sense of responsibility in the eyes of Europe and of the world. It was said that the so-called Loyalist population of Ireland would have recourse to arms. But that was a strange species of loyalty, as the Bill if it passed would be law, and loyalty was obedience to the law. It was idle to talk of the right of nations to freedom and self-government with the case of Ireland before us, which had been governed so long by exceptional coercive legislation. Why should we not in this matter walk by faith and wipe away this reproach? It was a disgrace to this country that we should employ more soldiers to keep Ireland in order than were required in India; and he believed that the Bill would do much to remove that reproach and to draw the two nations more closely together than they had been in the past. Believing also that the Bill would remove a stain from the English character, would open up to Ireland a new future, and would be the beginning of a reign of peace and harmony, he hoped it would pass with a considerable majority.

MR. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Eccleshall): Whatever cause of complaint the hon. Member who has just sat down may have, the ground of coercion must lie against Liberal Administrations. During the last 60 years about 50 Coercion Acts have been in force, and of these 39 have been passed by Liberal Governments. Out of the 10 which have been passed by Conservative Governments, nine were merely modifications of the legislation of their opponents. The Prime Minister has disestablished a loyal Church and passed two Land Bills, each of which he promised should be a final measure, and yet the question is as far from settlement as ever. The hon. Member (Mr. B. Fletcher) has advised us to walk by faith. It requires, indeed, a vast deal of faith to trust in the Prime Minister's Irish policy after his 20 years of conspicuous failure. The hon. Member refers to this Bill as if it might benefit Irish commerce, and yet every trading body in Ireland, and even the trade unionists, have protested against this Bill, and some of the largest employers of labour are about, in consequence of this Bill, to remove their establishments to Scotland or England. A policy of separation has been abruptly flashed upon the country and upon a Parliament elected on entirely different issues. That policy of separation is expressed in a measure the most unsettling and the least final of any within human experience. The influence and outcome of this scheme of disintegration will be even more fatal in its ultimate results upon our Imperial greatness than disastrous in its immediate effect upon the Union between Great Britain and Ireland. The Prime Minister's proposals are, beyond doubt, a complete surprise to Parliament and to the country. In June last the Prime Minister and his Cabinet had decided to pursue what they now stigmatize as a policy of "coercion," though then they would have called it "renewing the

Crimes Act," or "simply enforcing the law," or, perhaps, "the repression of sheer rapine." A premonition of his own weakness in face of such a temptation did thus force its way to articulate expression, in spite of the experienced caution of the "Old Parliamentary Hand." The Prime Minister contemplated the certainty of a great increase in the Parliamentary forces of the hon. Member for the City of Cork. In face of that increase, he warned the Liberal Party that it "would not be safe" for them to hold Office in a Parliament where the Irish Separatist Party held the balance. I quite agree with the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) that this Parliament has no moral right to carry through such a revolution as this Bill proposes without giving the country the opportunity of deciding upon the question. As to the verdict of the country, I entertain no doubt. The great mass of the people of Great Britain will be as resolute in defence of their National Union and their Imperial greatness as the English-speaking people of the American Republic were unflinching in defence of their Union 20 years ago. It is the greatest outrage and insult to Constitutional and Popular Government and to public candour that the Prime Minister should have kept the Irish Question in Cimmerian darkness during the General Election; that he should then try to cram his policy down the throats of a new Parliament, without warning and in face of a hundred counter declarations from himself. When the honest patriotism of many of his most tried and devoted followers revolts from this fatal scheme of disruption, and when the defeat of the measure is imminent, then the Prime Minister makes use of the most flagitious weapon in political warfare. He tries to light up the baleful fires of class antagonism and of social hatred. He appeals to the basest passions of the people in a way infinitely more mischievous and more reprehensible than the incitements of the Socialist agitators of Trafalgar Square. He denounces all those who oppose him as "class," or the dependents "of class." The appeal from argument to prejudice, and from education and intelligence to the passions of the street, has been common enough among the demagogues of the decaying democracies of the past. It is the first time that a Minister of the British Crown has stooped to such a weapon. It is at once a confession of failure and an irrefutable indictment by the right hon. Gentleman of himself and of his followers. There is something ludicrous in the attempt to stigmatize old Colleagues and staunch Liberals like the two right hon. Members for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright and Mr. J. Chamberlain), like the lamented Member for Bradford (Mr. Forster), like the right hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen), and the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands), as "class or the dependents of class." It is quite true that all the Professions; that the most eminent men in literature, art, science, and history; that those who have position, title, or wealth; and that the trading and commercial classes are opposed to this destructive Bill. But these are not all. If the Prime Minister is so rash as to appeal to the country, he will find that there are millions of loyal and patriotic working men as firmly determined to maintain national Union as those unfortunate persons who are, in his opinion, disqualified by their wealth and position from giving judgment upon it. The most deplorable result of this Separatist policy for Ireland will, in my opinion, be its influence upon the cohesion and union of the Imperial Dominions of the country. The Imperial ascendency of this country has been of priceless advantage to the countries and to the peoples where it has been exercised. The British race has been the foremost agent in the civilization of the world. It has peopled vast countries; it has civilized Continents; it has led the van of Constitutional progress and of well-ordered freedom. The British rule over those 250,000,000 of alien population in India is the most marvellous example of beneficent Government—good for the Rulers, and, beyond precedent and estimate, good for the ruled—that the world's history can show. But there are personal and race jealousies; there are slumbering ambitions and antagonisms that it would be easy to fan into fever heat. There are hostile and aggressive Governments ready to grasp at any opportunity for supplanting the influence and eager to act as the residuary legatees of our matchless Empire. Already agitators in India are clamouring for the same separation there. Once start the dangerous principle of disruption; once foster these destructive centrifugal forces, and no man can say where the end may be. You enter upon that course of disintegration which has been fatal to every Imperial Power in the past, which is in our own age scattering the Ottoman Empire into fragments, and which, if allowed to develop, must reduce England to the level of Holland and Spain. The word "foreign" was applied by the Prime Minister to the Irish people and to laws made in Ireland by this Imperial Parliament, in which 103 active and capable Irish Members have a full share. Ireland has been for centuries an integral portion of these Realms. Irishmen have borne their part, and a brilliant part, in the construction and safeguarding of the Empire, and in every profession, career, and phrase of our national existence. Hundreds of thousands of Irish labourers now freely compete with English labour in the seaport and manufacturing towns of England and Scotland. Irishmen are found in every Colony and Dependency of Great Britain. To describe Irishmen as "foreign" is a monstrous and mischievous paradox. How will the new Irish Parliament, if it be established, how will the Irish people—or how can you even expect them to—accept the control and ascendancy in the matter of law-making, of Foreign and Colonial policy, and of Imperial taxation from the hands of an Imperial Government and an Imperial Parliament which the Prime Minister deliberately teaches Ireland to regard as "foreign?" What an evil misnomer to supply for the misguiding of other races that are our fellow-subjects in distant Continents. If Irishmen are to be treated as "foreigners," what is to hinder other portions of the Empire from claiming the same position for themselves. Nothing that the Prime Minister has ever said or done is likely to bear such baleful fruit as this reckless and baseless epithet. The scheme for a separate Irish Parliament which the Prime Minister has originated, and which his emasculated Cabinet have swallowed, has been so analyzed, dissected, smashed, and pulverized, that not even the most servile of the Caucuses dares to defend it more than in the vaguest terms. Those portions of the scheme which were paraded by the Prime Minister in his opening speech as essential and vital are, we are now told, subject to reversal. Even the Land Purchase Bill, which was emphatically described as an inseparable portion of the scheme, and which Earl Spencer said, so late as April 21, it would be "base and treacherous," not to carry out in its entirety, is trembling in the balance. This Bill is, to the last degree, inconsistent, anomalous, impracticable, and unsettling. It bristles with causes of dispute and quarrel between the two countries. It contains the certain seed of civil war in Ireland. It can only, if passed, lead to separation or to a deadly struggle between Ireland and Great Britain. This Bill means repeal of the Union. That is clear. It removes the Irish Members from the Imperial Parliament, and, with certain exceptions, it transfers the control of Irish affairs from the Imperial Parliament to a separate Irish Legislature. That is, this Bill repeals the chief conditions of the Act of Union. That Union has been of great advantage to Ireland. At the outset it raised Ireland out of the slough of Jacobinism, anarchy, and bloody rebellion into which she had sunk under Grattan's Parliament. It has been the cause of enormous development in her commercial prosperity and in the material comfort of her people. The immutable laws of Nature, which have placed Ireland close to our Western shores, have rendered the closest union between the two countries essential and inevitable for both. The Irish would suffer far more than the British by separation. Great Britain is the best, almost the only, customer for Irish produce. Thousands—it might almost be said millions—of Irishmen find profitable employment in England and Scotland, and in the British Colonies. How would they like the Prime Minister to be taken at his word? How would they like to be treated as "foreign," or to be requested to seek their livelihood within the narrow and over-populated limits of their native land? So long as Ireland is an integral portion of these Realms, Irishmen will be welcomed in every part of the Empire. When they become "foreigners," the feeling will be very different, and justly so. There is no finality about the measure. That is my chief objection to it. Heaven knows that Englishmen would consent to heavy sacrifices in order to set at rest for ever this harassing and troublesome problem of Irish government. But there is no settlement within this Bill. Throughout it is pregnant with disturbance and dispute. The remedy it offers is no cure; it is an aggravation of the complaint; it is tenfold worse than the disease. It has been well said that the Irish are the worst people in the world to run away from. Never was there a truer word. The Celtic Irishman has many generous and attractive qualities. His humour, his vivacity, his warmth of heart, and his eloquence are appreciated by all who know the race. But among the peoples of the world the Irish are not the least exacting, nor the most easily contented, nor the fondest of the reign of law. There are restrictions—strange and unreasonable restrictions—in this Bill, with which neither the Irish Parliament nor the Irish people would ever be content. It banishes the Irish Representatives from the Imperial Parliament. And here let me say that I should deeply regret to see all the Irish Members removed from the Imperial Parliament. I do not think that either our debates, or our policy, or our legislative wisdom would gain by such a removal. If the Prime Minister consents to allow them to remain, he has entirely failed to-night to show how this can be done, and how their presence in the two Parliaments can be practically arranged. One by one the concession of these restrictions will be demanded by the Irish Parliament. If we resist, it can only be by force—that is, by war. If we yield, it means a rapid and certain descent towards absolute separation. Better, far better, immediate and complete separation than this uncertain, ever perturbed, and anxious relationship, which every year must produce a fresh crop of troubles. But better still the resolute enforcement of the law at once, and a united and emphatic declaration by all Parties that the United Kingdom and the United Parliament must always so remain. This Bill will not satisfy the Irish. Indeed, I do not believe that the hon. Member for the City of Cork and his Friends would ever accept a Legislature bound by such humiliating restrictions, did they not recognize and welcome in it a sure fulcrum towards that entire separation which they have over and over again declared to be their ultimate aim. This Bill creates and places in the hands of those who have been the avowed and recognized foes of British power a tremendous lever for ultimate separation. Depend upon it that lever, once it is established, will be used, ruthlessly and to the bitter end. The entire civil administration of Ireland is to be in the hands of the new Irish Parliament; that is, every town and district in Ireland will be administered by the National League—by the lawbreakers, village tyrants, "Boycotters," and blackmailers who constitute the agents and the power of the League. It is too probable that the darker and more dangerous Irish conspirators across the Atlantic will really control the new Parliament and its policy. Ireland will, therefore, be in a very brief space, organized and guided by those unfriendly, perhaps by those bitterly hostile, to Great Britain and to everything British—hostile to our race, creed, laws, and form of government. At present two-thirds of Ireland is discontented, demoralized, hostile, owing to the weakness and shifting of the Prime Minister's policy since 1880. But Ireland is not a serious danger. A rising would have no chance of success. It is not improbable that, even without British help, the Loyalists might hold the Island for the Empire against a Rebel Party. Let the British people consider calmly and in time what the existence of an armed Ireland, close on their Western shores, within 60 miles of their greatest seaport, will mean in these days of rapid communication and of sudden political cataclysms. Let them carefully reflect what an enormous increase in their military and naval preparations, and in their Imperial Expenditure, and in the burdens upon the British taxpayers, such a portentous danger must involve. In these cases it does not do to take anything for granted. The danger might possibly not arise; but it would have to be guarded against. I fear it would arise, and, under the disturbing conditions of the Bill, speedily arise. And this brings me to a very serious peril involved in this Bill, and one which has been strangely overlooked. I mean the certainty of complications with Foreign Powers, and especially with the United States. It is obvious that the Imperial Government will be fully responsible for Ireland in all our relations with Foreign Powers. Yet the practical means of enforcing respect for International rights upon Ireland will be small. If Ireland has an independent Administration, the Foreign Enlistment Act may easily be infringed, as privateers may easily escape from Irish ports. Great Britain will have to bear and to pay for the consequences. But the gravest danger will result from the United States. There is a very large Irish population in the States. It is a most formidable political force, carefully organized, and voting solid under the direction of its leaders, much as the 85 followers of the hon. Member for the City of Cork are disciplined to vote solid in this House. It is a great temptation to American politicians, Irish and non-Irish, to coquet with this organized vote, even at the risk of hostility to England. But hitherto the opening for interference has not existed. It would be a gross International outrage for the Government of one nation to interfere between the subjects and Government of another, except, of course, in case of open war. Ireland is an integral part of these Kingdoms, and Irishmen are absolutely and directly subject to the Imperial Government. The Irish in America have, therefore, been, perforce, content with a private agitation and subscription, and with now and then a platonic Resolution in a State Legislature. But, give the Irish a separate Parliament, and all will be changed. From that moment, Ireland will be regarded as a separate and a *quasi*-independent nation, by Irishmen in the United States, and, perhaps, by those who are not Irishmen. The right of interfering will be boldly and irresistibly claimed. Every dispute that arises between the Irish and the Imperial Parliaments and Governments—and they will be legion—will find a ready echo in America. Agitation by the enemies of this country will be fanned more and more fiercely with each fresh dispute. Do not believe those who say that this Bill will satisfy the Irish in America. It will do nothing of the kind. It will influence their hopes and strengthen their agitation. The fiercer and more active spirits there desire to humble, and even to destroy, British power and British prosperity. They hate the British Monarchy and British Institutions. They wish to substitute an anarchical Republic for the authority of the British Crown. I see in this Bill a terrible leverage given to the foes of Great Britain, and the fatal germs of quarrel and war with the great and kindred people across the Atlantic. Such a contest is most to be deprecated, and would, in my opinion, be the most deplorable of catastrophes. This scheme imposes grievous and intolerable burdens upon the taxpayers of Great Britain, and without any corresponding advantage. At the outstart the Prime Minister presents the new Irish Parliament with a gift of £1,400,000 a-year as a gentle inducement for those whose policy he described four years ago as one of "sheer rapine," to accept the control of Irish affairs. Next, he fixes definitely the annual contribution of Ireland to the Imperial Exchequer. The Empire may be engaged in a life-and-death struggle for its most precious Dominions, or even for our national independence. Success may be as important for Ireland as for Great Britain. Yet the Irish will not contribute a farthing to the cost of such a great Imperial struggle, save by the consent of those whom the Prime Minister described four years ago as labouring to "place different parts of the Empire in direct hostility one with the other." The Prime Minister has quoted the instance of 1795, in which the Irish Parliament did refuse to contribute anything towards the expenses of the great war with France; and he said that the Irish Parliament was right in so refusing. That was a very ominous statement. [Mr. GLADSTONE: Oh!] Yes, Sir; we have been accustomed to hear from the right hon. Gentleman covert attacks upon Viscount Palmerston, the greatest Liberal statesman of our time. But now the Prime Minister goes farther. He attacks and denounces Mr. Pitt, the greatest statesman that England has ever possessed. He approves of the cowardly and un-English policy of Mr. Fox and the pro-French Party of the last century. He approves of the refusal of the factious Irish Parliament of 1795 to support Mr. Pitt's manly resistance, first, to French Jacobinism, and then to the military despotism of Napoleon. Let the country now understand what the Prime Minister's views really are, and to what this Bill will lead. He condemns the magnificent, Imperial, statesmanlike policy of Mr. Pitt, which preserved the independence of this country, rescued the liberties of Europe from the tyranny of Bonaparte, and gave the world 50 years of peace and prosperity. Heavy burdens will also be placed upon England and Scotland by the Land Purchase scheme. With regard to that measure, I will only say I agree with the Prime Minister in his argument that, if this Separatist Bill is passed, and we deliberately place the Loyalists of Ireland at the mercy of those who are their traditional and inveterate foes, then the Imperial Parliament is bound, by honour and duty, to give compensation to those who by its act are ruined. £135,000,000 at least will be requisite for that compensation. The responsibility for the £5,000,000 interest for the Land Purchase Bill will fall upon the taxpayers of England and Scotland. I pass over the enormous expense in military and naval preparation which an organized and *quasi*-independent Ireland must impose upon this country. Within five years after the establishment of a separate Legislature for Ireland, I venture to prophecy that the extra burdens which would thereby be imposed upon the British people would amount to at least £10,000,000 a-year, and possibly to a great deal more. How much wiser, kinder to Ireland, and juster to England, it would be to meet this crisis with the small amount of manly courage and resolute vigour which would suffice to settle it. How much better and more far-sighted to enforce the majesty of the law in Ireland as in Great Britain. How infinitely more statesmanlike to teach Irish agitators that, while we will give Irishmen every privilege and right that we concede to Englishmen and to Scotchmen, we will give them no more, and, above all, that we will never yield either to self-seeking ambitions, or to the menaces of terrified Ministers, or of lawless conspirators the National Union and the Imperial integrity of these Realms. For weal or woe Ireland must remain an unseparated and an inseparable member of the United Kingdom. The most repulsive feature about the Bill is the injustice and ruin it must inflict upon the Loyalists of Ireland. After all, the hon. Member for the City of Cork only succeeded, with all the temporal terrorism of his National League, and with all the spiritual terrorism of the Irish hierarchy and priesthood, in driving a little over half the Irish electorate to the polls in his support. There is a population of 1,500,000 of declared Loyalists in Ireland. There are at the outside only 3,500,000 of Separatists or rebels, or whatever it is right to call them. Out of this 3,500,000, I believe that if the law were enforced and individual liberty firmly upheld by the Government, not one-half would ask for separation. The Irish Loyalists know what they have to expect, and they do well to prepare against it. Existence would soon be intolerable to them; they would be fortunate, indeed, if they escaped with their lives. But Ulster and the Loyalists of Ireland have other claims upon our respect and support. They are our garrison; but they are more. They are the salt of Ireland. They pay four-fifths of the Irish taxation received by the Imperial Exchequer. They are the promoters of almost all the manufacturing industry and wealth of Ireland. Without them Ireland would soon become a desert. Drive from Ireland the loyal and Protestant population, you not only inflict upon them a cruel injustice, but you ruin the whole of Ireland. There are agrarian causes at work in Ireland which need careful study, and Great Britain will grudge no practical remedy. In some districts the soil is over-populated with a needy and miserable peasantry. In such places a Government plan of emigration is the best, if not the only, cure. A tithe of the sum which the Prime Minister proposes to spend in breaking up the Empire would remove many hundreds of thousands of half-starving persons to ample and fertile lands in the Colonies, where they might, with industry, flourish and be happy. The desire of the Irish peasant to own the soil he cultivates might also be assisted by a system of State loans, on easy terms, which would benefit alike tenants and landowners. There is no lack of schemes to accomplish these beneficent purposes; but, first and foremost, the authority of the law must be asserted. It is the primal condition of all national progress and social amelioration, and until the law prevails all else will fail. Union is strength. The example of all the prosperous and powerful nations of the world is directly opposed to this fatal course of disintegration. The inapplicable and unhappy precedents of Turkey, and Norway, and Austria, quoted by the right hon. Gentleman, really constitute warning beacons to guard Englishmen from their fatal course rather than precedents to follow. On the other side, the conspicuous instances of Germany, Italy, and the United States at once occur. These are the leading, the progressive, and the prosperous nations of the world. Germany, Italy, and the United States owe their success and their present grandeur to the principle of unification, and not to that of disruption. They have become great and strong by taking a course the exact opposite of that now urged upon this country by the right hon. Gentleman. Germany, Italy, and the United States have bound together and united in closer and more irrefragable ties their divided and shattered members, and they have thereby wonderfully flourished. The British people will do well to copy the splendid example of German, Italian, and American union rather than that of Turkish disintegration. If the Prime Minister wishes to know what a real and patriotic Democracy will do to maintain Imperial integrity, let him read and digest the history of the United States 25 years ago. The American people, not a "class," or the "dependents of a class," were then confronted with separation and dismemberment, much as Great Britain is now threatened. They faced the peril like men, and they overcame it. They poured out their treasure and their blood till victory crowned the Standard of Union. Since that tremendous sacrifice and victory, they have flourished and progressed as a powerful and united people. I believe the people of England and Scotland will decide as did their brethren across the Atlantic in that momentous crisis. Had, by ill-fortune, the Prime Minister guided the destinies of America at that fateful time, the United States would have been split up into discordant and hostile Principalities, instead of being a great, free, and compact people. There are two phrases which play a large part in this Irish controversy. "Justice to Ireland," and "Coercion." Even if there be now injustice to Ireland, far greater than Irish interests are involved in this question of separation. There is the security and well-being of 32,500,000 of loyal Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen who are opposed to the dismemberment desired by some 3,500,000 of discontented Irish Celts. There is the Imperial union and strength, so essential for the welfare of the whole 300,000,000 of the Queen's subjects in all parts of the world. It is high time that less was heard of this cuckoo cry of "Justice to Ireland," which only means a succession of quack remedies for the insatiable demands of Irish revolution. More of "justice" is needed for England, Scotland, and for the Empire at large. But has not Ireland had full justice? "Coercion!" What does "coercion" really mean? Nothing but the repression of crime, and of crime that in England or Scotland would not be tolerated for an hour. All we ask is, that foul murder and fiendish outrage upon man and beast and dark terror shall be punished in Ireland as they are punished in England and Scotland. The odious crime of "Boycotting"—the special product of the *régime* of the hon. Member for the City of Cork and of his Leagues—has broken out in the United States. In New York City they have made short work with what is well termed this "accursed exotic;" 120 "Boycotters" have been shut up in prison, and not one of them is a native American, or bears an English name. The whole moral sense of large sections of the Irish people has been perverted and demoralized by long indulgence in agrarian crime and in repudiation of their just obligations. The only remedy for this debasing and destroying coercion that now prevails in Ireland, is the firm and unswerving assertion of the majesty of the law. Whenever this Irish agitation has been boldly faced and manfully dealt with it has collapsed. We remember how ignominiously Smith O'Brien's rebellion ended. Ireland enjoyed 18 years of peaceful progress from 1850 to 1868. Then came the fatal policy of surrender and destruction invented by the present Prime Minister. Since the Prime Minister resumed power in 1880 all has gone to wrack and ruin; and now we are confronted with revolution and disruption. The task is by no means so difficult as the craven fears and the puerile menaces of the Irish Secretary would have us think. He would have the British Government yield to the Jacobin Revolution of the National League, in order to escape the dark plots of the dynamitards. Was there ever such an unworthy and pusillanimous gospel of surrender? It is a modern Danegelt, a Dynamitegelt, that would result just as its prototype resulted. It only requires a modicum of consistent and resolute government to restore peace to Ireland. The most cowardly policy to adopt is to yield, as the Government proposes, to the forces of anarchy and revolution, and to give up Ireland to the National League. If they did not yield, it is said that they will be obliged to give Ireland over to the control of the dynamitards and the secret societies. That is, indeed, a worthy confession for a great and powerful Minister to make. If there is a danger to be feared from secret societies, from dynamite and assassination, the best answer which can be given to the Government is in the words uttered by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen)—words which would live as long as the English language lasted—words of statesmanship and patriotism. If the statesmen of this country are threatened with the dagger and dynamite, then they "can make their wills and do their duty."

Mr. JORDAN (Clare, W.): Mr. Speaker, the House will perhaps indulge me for a short time, being, as I am, a Northern man and an Ulster Protestant. I was born and live in one of the most ultra Loyalist counties of Ulster. I was born of the peasantry, and I have lived amongst them all my days. I think, therefore, that I am as well qualified to speak in relation to the Protestantism of the North and of the feeling of the Loyalist minority as any Member from Ulster, or as any other Ulster man. It is said by the opponents of the measure that the House ought to reject the Bill in the interests of the Protestant people of the North of Ireland on several grounds—first, that the Bill would remove the Protestant population of the North from a Protestant Parliament, and place them under a Parliament elected by the 1,700 branches of the National League, by which means they would come under the tender mercies of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) and Archbishop Walsh. It is further stated that the Protestants in the North would either have to leave Ulster voluntarily or be expelled by the new Irish Parliament. It is further contended that the Bill ought to be rejected because the Protestants of the North fear that their property, their liberties, and their lives would be jeopardized; and, finally, that it ought to be rejected because, in case the Bill passes into law, the Protestants of Ulster will refuse to obey this law, and that they will refuse also to obey the laws made by the Irish Parliament. It is said, further, that they will refuse to pay the taxes which may be imposed by the Irish Parliament; and, lastly, that they will fight. In reference to the first of these objections, perhaps I may be permitted to say that the objectors seem to me to forget altogether the nature of the Irish Parliament, and the constituent elements of that Assembly. In the first place, it would not be, as has been intimated already, a Parnellite Parliament, nor would it be elected by the 1,700 branches of the National League; because the National League, having answered its purpose, having been incorporated in order to procure a National Legislature and a National Parliament, would, in the natural course of events, having attained that object, be dissolved, and, like the organizations which were called into existence in relation to Slavery and the Corn Laws, it would pass away and a new order of things would arise; consequently, the election to seats in the Irish House of Commons would be upon new and other issues altogether. The Members of the Irish Parliament would not be elected on any question as to independence, because that would have already been brought about, but on Irish issues in reference to the welfare of the country. The new Assembly would be composed of 28 elected Peers and 75 other elected Members possessing large pecuniary or property qualifications, and elected by a franchise of a very high order. It is estimated, as my hon. Friend the Member for South Tyrone (Mr. W. O'Brien) stated to-night, that the Conservative and Loyal Members in the North with those from Dublin University would amount to some 36, making altogether 140 in round numbers, as compared with the probable majority of 160 who would represent the Catholic and Democratic Protestant people of Ireland. Therefore, the people of Ireland would not be likely to be handed over to the tender mercies of what is called a "Parnellite Parliament."

The second reason why we are asked to reject this Bill is that the Protestant population of the North would either have to leave Ireland or be expelled from it. Now, I think they might go further and fare worse. I know that many of the peasantry have had to leave Ireland on account of evictions, and some of them may have to leave it again in order to better their condition; but there will be no necessity for either Irish Protestant peasants or landlords to leave Ireland on account of the establishment of an Irish Legislature. To my knowledge, a Protestant landlord has had as little respect for a Protestant as a Catholic peasant. In fact, the great complaint of the Orange peasantry is that the Irish landlords, in order to get an additional pound or two of rent, have frequently paid more respect to a Catholic than to them. But why, even if the landlords find themselves compelled to sell, should they leave the country if their incomes are reduced? I do not see to what country the Irish aristocracy can go where they will be able to live cheaper. Assuredly they will not come to London in order to live cheaper; and as their castles and demesnes will be left to them, even with a reduced rental, they will be able to live cheaper in Ireland than they can elsewhere. There is every reason why they should remain in the country. Take the situation and the beauty of their residences. What can be more pleasing to the eye than some of the baronial halls which I, as a humble peasant, have had the pleasure of admiring? We do not want the Irish peasantry to leave the country. We want the people of the country to be producers; we want the labourer, the artizan, and the manufacturer to remain in order that they may, by their skill and industry, add to the wealth of the country; and we want the gentry and others who are not producers to be the consumers of what Ireland itself produces. It is in this way, and in this way only, that we can by any means build up a State. If you ask any of these men in the North of Ireland, as I have done during the last fortnight, whether they are getting ready to leave the country, you will soon find that all this talk is mere nonsense. Not long ago I asked a most intense Tory—a most outrageous Orangeman—what he proposed to do. I said to him—"The times are momentous; are you getting ready to go?" Sir, that man, with a twinkle in his eye, laughed at me, and said—"I am not going yet." During the Recess I had an interview with a very boisterous Member of the loyal minority. He said—"What is to be the end of all this?" I replied—"I think it will be very serious, and I think that you ought to throw in your lot with the national cause at once." He remarked—"I would rather pay a pound an acre more under the present Administration than under an Irish Parliament." "Well," I said—"If you are content to pay a pound an acre more I am sure these Protestant gentlemen will take it from you, and nobody will stand between you and your wishes." "Then," said he—"If it comes to the worst I will leave the country." I told him it might be a very good thing to leave the country, but that I would advise him to wait a little longer, and to have all his affairs arranged as he would pack his travelling bag, and be ready to go at a moment's notice. He said—"Come up and tell the people that." And he left me with an incredulous smile. They have no notion of going, and they are only keeping up this kind of feeling in the hope that they may frighten and coerce the British Parliament into refusing to pass this measure. Now, I know these men as well as any man in this House, and I know this, that the more you assure the people in the North of Ireland that they are absolutely safe the more row they will kick up. As they are certain that nothing will happen to them, so their cry is—"Let me get at 'em, Mr. Policeman." It is said that they are afraid that their liberty, their property, and their lives will be jeopardized and endangered if they remain in the country under the Irish Parliament. I do not believe in anything of the kind; and as to their religion—property with them is religion. Property is very largely their religion. You will hear them sometimes praying and trusting in Providence, and alternately trusting in the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill). The noble Lord reposes his confidence in them for the integrity of this great Empire. But then, again, they put their trust not only in Providence, but in powder and ball. Really you cannot understand these men—whether it is in God, in the Member for Paddington, in the great Tory Party, or in powder and ball that they trust. You cannot possibly tell because they use the phrases indiscriminately. I have the greatest possible respect for real and earnest and sincere religion, but I have no respect for this travesty of religion. I have a respect deep down in my soul for God, but I have no respect for this ideal god of the Orangemen of Ulster. It might really be imagined that in the North the people have lost their God, and they are looking for one to replace Him, crying, "O Baal, hear us!" They do not seem to know how to get out of the difficulty. At the same time they have no real fear of losing their liberty. The Protestant ladies, who, as we are told, have been so much alarmed, have no fear whatever, and if the ordinary farmer's wife says that she has no fear, I do not see why the stalwart military majors we hear so much of should be afraid. Only the other day I said to a lady—a very respectable farmer's wife—"Are you not getting ready to go?" "Oh dear, no," she replied, "I am not thinking of going at all; I have not the least fear." Sir, it is passion and not fear which animates the opponents of this Bill. These people have been pampered all their lives up to the present time; they have been in the ascendancy and they have monopolized power in the country. What they fear is that they will now have to be placed on an equality with other people. They are enraged because they—the "loyal minority," as they call themselves,—will have to undergo a competitive examination with their Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen in order to obtain a fair share of what is going. That is what they fear. If this Bill becomes law—and I hope it will—they will be quite prepared from the greatest to the least among them to make the best of what they now regard a a bad job, and we shall see them running and flying, not out of the country, but to take advantage of every benefit which may accrue from the Bills. Indeed they will be the first to clamour and cry out for more. I am perfectly certain the Roman Catholic population of the North of Ireland, where the loyal minority have fought them foot to foot, are just; which the loyal minority is not. Over and over again during the last five or six years I have heard Catholics and their teachers, the priests, advising discontented men to take no offence, and to give no offence; and I wish that the same could be said on the other side. They have no fear that their liberties are in jeopardy, and as to their lives they are perfectly certain they will be protected. I have said that the Catholics in the North of Ireland are just. I will go further. I have often asked Ulster Protestants—"What has your Roman Catholic neighbour done to you? Has he not been just, civil, and obliging, and has he not done everything which a neighbour ought to do?" I have invariably received the reply—"My experience of my Catholic neighbour is that often he is far better than my Protestant neighbour." Then, what are they afraid of? It is said that that may be the case in the North of Ireland, but we must go to the South and the West to find Catholic oppression of Protestants. They are obliged to go into an unknown region in order to find their ideal of Catholic oppression. They say—"Go to the South and the West and there you will find such crimes and outrages that every Protestant man living there has his life frightened out of him." Now, as a Northern Protestant, and a Protestant from principle, I have myself gone to the South, and what have I found both there and in the West? Not merely justice, but generosity "pressed down and shaken together and running over." Nothing could be more generous than the action of the priests and people of the South to myself. The whole question resolves itself into one of fear of landlords losing their land and their power. As other hon. Gentlemen have discussed that question, and as I have very elastic views as to the manner in which landlords have obtained their property, and the way in which they have kept it, I will say nothing more upon that subject; but if there is discontent or disloyalty in Ireland, it has all been incited by landlordism, aided in too many cases by Protestant clergy who have incited the multitude from the pulpit—but landlordism is at the bottom of the agitation. Mr. Speaker, I have seen old men compelled to take their hats off to the bailiff of an estate. In my early days I have seen them following at a respectable distance behind the bailiff in a market town; and I have heard my own father, coming from the estate office, complain of having been grossly insulted by the agent, who told him that he was a liar. He was a man, Sir, who would not tell a lie. In Ireland the tenant effects all the improvements upon his holdings, and just in proportion as he effects those improvements his rent is raised. When he complains, all the redress he gets is to be served with notice to quit and told that he will be ejected from his holding. I hold this to have been property most unjustly acquired by the landlord. Talk about the rights of property; the landlords are the robbers, and not the tenants. It is the landlords who have incited to discontent, and if there be discontent and disloyalty in Ireland they are the cause of it. But for the ingrained dread of Popery—I do not use the word offensively, but as it is used—in which the Irish Protestants have been trained from their mothers' knees, and which they have imbibed from their earliest training, the Protestant farmers in the North are as ripe for revolution in order to throw off the yoke of landlordism as any Catholic. True, the majority of the Protestant farmers now vote against Home Rule; but having eased their minds in that direction, they come to the Nationalist and say—"Let us see what you will do for us in regard to the land." If this measure be passed into law, will they fight against the law—not only English law, but against Irish law—and refuse to pay taxation? There is a great deal of talk about maintaining the connection between England and Ireland. If this measure passes that connection will largely depend on the amount of tribute which will be paid by the Irish Parliament to England. It is against this tribute that the Orangemen of Ulster will fight, say they; and I do not imagine that the Irish Parliament will be very much enamoured of collecting the tribute. The loyal minority will tell us that we have a National Parliament imposing taxes; but it is by those taxes the tribute must be paid, and it is against the payment of that tribute which is really to maintain the tie between the two countries that they will fight. If they will fight against paying that tribute to England, then it will be more England's concern than it will be Ireland's. A very worthy minister in this country wrote a pamphlet a few days ago in which he stated that it would be an awful thing to send Scotch and English soldiers to shoot down the Northern Protestants because they would not pay taxes. Now, I maintain that if they refuse to pay taxes you must either send English soldiers to compel them to pay, or the English Parliament must not expect to get the money which the loyal minority refuse to pay. You may take either horn of the dilemma; I do not care which. The question is—"Will these men fight?" The House will excuse me if I offer an opinion. We have scarcely heard anything during this debate from the opponents of the Bill but mere opinion. The question is—"Will they fight?" In my opinion, when it comes to the point they will have no notion whatever of fighting. I know that the hon. and gallant Member for Armagh (Major Saunderson) was not long ago breathing out "slaughter and threatening;" but I believe that he will be speedily converted, and in the end become a Nationalist himself. I was very much struck with a speech recently made by the hon. Member for South Belfast (Mr. W. Johnston). The hon. Member reminded me very much of a vision in the Apocalypse, where it is said—"And I saw another angel flying through the Heavens." I thought I saw the hon. Member with a Bible for one wing and a rifle for the other. That is the gospel of the Royal Patriotic Association. They desire to preach to the heathen abroad, and shoot down their fellow-countrymen at home. The hon. Member for South Belfast occupies so peculiar a position that it is difficult to understand whether he is going in for death or glory. But when I have spoken quietly to these men at home—for instance, a District Master of Orangemen, a very important personage, fierce and pugnacious, of course—when I asked him what appointment he was getting, whether he was going to be a lieutenant, or a captain, or a major in the new Ulster Army, he has honestly told me that he had got no appointment. I know that among the loyal minority there are many professional agitators who are going round the country on the rampage, including many clergymen who are accustomed to preach the gospel of peace, inciting and inflaming Protestant prejudice and bigotry and swaggering for fight. I have asked some of the most earnest Orangemen in the North—"Do you really imagine that these men will fight?" And they have told me distinctly and clearly—certainly one respectable gentleman did—that it is all bunkum and bounce, and that they have no notion whatever of fighting. I have told them that there will be no National Army to fight; I have reminded them that if they intend fighting they will want arms, ammunition, a commissariat, a medical department, and horse, foot, and artillery, and, in addition, that they will have to borrow a General from the English Army. I have told them that their fighting implies all that, and when they are ready, they will have to fight, not against the National Army, but against the Army of the Queen. They told me that they did not mean to do anything of the kind. Nor do they. There is only one thing which could make fighting somewhat palatable to me, and that is, that if all the farmers were out in the field arrayed against the law, the landlords would have no opportunity of charging them with rent; it would be a practical no-rent policy. The only thing which could make fighting tolerable to me would be that it would be the beginning of the end of rack rents. I have never objected to what is a fair rent. I have attended very many meetings, and I have had thousands of tenants asking me for advice. I never gave any advice yet that I should be ashamed to hear recited in this or any other Assembly. No tenant has ever been led to do an act in consequence of any advice I have given to him that could do injury either to himself or his landlord. I have heard it stated in this House, that all the Protestant communities in the North of Ireland are unanimously opposed to Home Rule. Now, Mr. Speaker, I beg to take exception to that assertion. I am not only a Protestant, but I am a Dissenting Protestant, and a Dissenting Protestant is the staunchest of all Protestants. It has been stated in this House that the Methodists of Ireland are unanimously against Home Rule. That is not so. I admit freely that the majority of the Methodists of Ireland are antagonistic to Home Rule; but there is an intelligent, and a growing, and an increased inclination for Home Rule among the Methodist population. In almost all their Church meetings and Church courts there is an intelligent minority, small though it may have been, in favour of Home Rule. Even at the last meeting of the Committee of Privileges of the Methodist Society, at Dublin, there were three gentleman who distinctly spoke in favour of Home Rule, and of the measure of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone). I have letters in my pocket from Methodist people in different parts of Ireland, wishing success to this measure. No doubt, there is an attempt to suppress and "Boycott" those who express such opinions; and the loyal minority can "Boycott" with a vengeance when they set themselves about it. They have been "Boycotting" for the last 25 years in the North of Ireland every man who has opposed them in any shape or form. Nor are the Presbyterians unanimous against Home Rule. I have in my pocket a letter from a gentleman who is a leading Presbyterian. Over and over again he has refused to join the National League; but now he writes that he has decided in favour of a National Irish Legislature. Neither are the English Methodists or the English Presbyterians against Home Rule. The most influential English Methodist journal in England—*The Methodist Times*—the Editor, Rev. H. P. Hughes, the staff, and many of the shareholders, and very many English Methodists, are strongly in favour of the settlement of this Irish Question upon the lines of the present Bill. It is altogether a mistake to say that either the Presbyterians or the Methodists are unanimously against Home Rule, and the longer the matter is studied and considered the more and more will the intelligence of the different Protestant denominations, who are now opposed to it, become favourable to it. I would urge the House not only to give us a measure of Home Rule, but a large measure of Home Rule. We are prepared to give up agitation, and to commence the building up of a National Legislature and a nation, if we can only obtain the conditions which will enable us to do so; but if you give us only a partial measure, you will repeat the blunder you committed in the Land Act of 1870, and you will simply continue the agitation instead of putting a stop to it. The present Bill, with some amendment, will be perfectly satisfactory, and we are prepared to accept it. The guarantees, though unnecessary, should be satisfactory to the minority; and I believe that the measure will not only be of advantage to Ireland, but I am also certain that it is just as much to the advantage of England to have these questions settled, rather than to continue a burning agitation.

Viscount EBRINGTON (Devonshire, Tavistock): The hon. Member who has just sat down, although he has given a very instructive and amusing account of his experiences among the Loyalist minority in Ireland, and the manners, customs, and religious observances there, has not contributed much to the debate, and certainly not as much as the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. W. O'Brien). The latter hon. Member made a very remarkable speech, the sincerity of which I do not desire to question. But the hon. Member has also made a good many other speeches at various times, and on various occasions, which compare very strangely with his present utterances. But, although I do not question the sincerity of the hon. Member, I must be permitted to doubt whether the conversion of the rest of Ireland will be as sudden and complete as that of the hon. Member. Like a good many others who have spoken in favour of these Bills, the hon. Member for South Tyrone has dealt rather with assumptions than with arguments. Foremost among his assumptions is that the 85 hon. Gentlemen who obey the orders of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) are the true and only Representatives of the people of Ireland. They are here, and there is no good discussing how they come to be here. As a matter of fact, the funds by which the National League is supported come rather from America than from Ireland. This was practically admitted in a letter recently sent by the hon. Member for Cork acknowledging American remittances; and further proof is to be found in the National League Parliamentary Fund, which showed, at the December meeting of the League, that the American contributions amounted to £6,000, while the Irish contributions only amounted to one-tenth of that sum. It is not as if there was no money in Ireland available for Parliamentary purposes, if enthusiasm in the cause was great. There is considerable movement among builders, carpenters, and others in Ireland at the present time, caused by the building and repair of churches, monasteries, and religious houses; and everybody knows that contributions for those purposes would be the first to be knocked off if the people were really hard up. But, no doubt, the hon. Members who follow the hon. Member for Cork are accepted by the majority of the Irish people as their Representatives. It is, however, a remarkable thing that while there are in Ireland a certain number of successful commercial concerns, and there are men eminent in business and men who have made reputations in the learned professions, there are no representatives of those classes among the followers of the hon. Member for Cork who sit below the Gangway. Probably, if we were to draw the names of any 80 Members of the House at random, it would be impossible to find a collection of Members so entirely unrepresentative of the various interests and communities that make up a people as the 85 hon. Gentlemen who claim to represent that nondescript article—the Irish nation. Another assumption frequently urged in this debate is that the passing of this Bill will have a sort of magical effect upon the Irish people and their present Leaders, and that they will develop a new and unsuspected capacity for self-government. It has been truly said that if it is desired to teach them responsibility, power must be given; but people generally content themselves with this assertion, and they have not shown that to teach responsibility to the Irish people it is necessary to give them much more power than it is proposed to intrust to the Scotch or Welsh, or to the inhabitants of any other part of the United Kingdom. Last December the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary said that if we wished to teach the Irish people the duties of citizenship, and to create in them a fitness for self-government, we must first of all teach them responsibility; and we could not teach them responsibility without giving them power. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of creating a capacity for self-government—creating that which is now non-existent. That is starting *de novo* and producing it, and doing it not by any gradual and well-considered process, not by any improvement of existing machinery, or by the development of existing institutions; not by methods which have succeeded in England and Scotland in creating a sense of responsibility and a capacity for self-government; but by a stroke of the pen. The method by which the right hon. Gentleman proposes to create that capacity is to put the Irish in a position which would try the civic virtues of any nation; and that, too, under Leaders whose antecedents, to say the least, do not augur well for the success of the experiment. The hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread), in the debate on the Motion for leave to introduce the Bill, said the first duty of the new Government of Ireland would be to restore order in a distracted country. How is that to be done? Is it to be done through the agency of the National League, through men like Mr. Sheridan, of Tubbercurry, whom the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) proposed to use two or three years ago for the suppression of outrages? Or would he make use of the civil servants whom this Bill makes independent of him after a couple of years, or of the police who are to be under the control of a different Executive? And I should like to know, further, supposing there was a difference of opinion between the Irish Government and the Irish Executive as to the employment of the police, and disaster should be the result, on whom would responsibility rest, and by whom would responsibility be brought home? By the Irish Parliament or by the English Parliament? The Viceroy, be it remembered, is to survive changes of Administration in England, and he may be the Viceroy of a former Government not agreeing in politics with the Ministry of the day; and this will not make it easier to fix responsibility upon him. Then another duty of the new Irish Government, according to the hon. Member for Bedford, would be to establish the credit of the country, and to invite capital to come back. The way in which Irish securities have gone down in the last few months does not augur very well for the success of that experiment. I wonder if there is any hon. Gentleman in the House who is prepared to invest trust money for which he is responsible in securities of the new Irish Government. I wonder how many votes any hon. Member would get in a division who proposed to add Irish Government securities to the list of those allowed for investments under the Settled Land Act. Then, in regard to the settlement of the agrarian difficulty, that is one of the points which the Irish Government would have to deal with. Would they deal with it on the basis of the hon. Member for Cork, or on the basis proposed by the Prime Minister? Would it be a case of prairie value with three years' purchase, or proposals similar to those which have been put forward in the House and generally repudiated on every part of the Ministerial side? No doubt, the Land Purchase scheme would do something towards the solution of the land difficulty in Ireland; but even then a very considerable difficulty would remain in the case of the gombeen man, whom no Land Purchase Bill would remove, and who would, in the event of one passing, be left virtually the landlord in a great part of Ireland. Then is it proposed to deal with mortgagees on the same principle as landlords? The great trouble in Ireland, it is said, is that it is a poor country. Is it likely to become richer or to recover prosperity if governed on a system under which no country can possibly flourish? Are banks under the new dispensation to have security for their advances? We are told that the first duty of the Irish Government would be to secure quiet possession. Is that to be accomplished by putting the unwritten law over the statute law? A somewhat curious case appeared in the newspapers in December last. A tenant in the county of Waterford got into difficulties four or five years ago, not with his landlord, but with the National Bank, who sold him up and bought his interest in the farm. A certain Mr. O'Donnell, having offered to pay a fine, was accepted as tenant, and took possession. At first he was "Boycotted;" but afterwards, for a time, matters went on quietly. Last winter, however, he was denounced as a land-grabber; his case was sent for trial under the local organization of the National League, and it was decided that no arrangement he had entered into was to be valid until it had been confirmed by the League. How will the Irish Parliament carry out the law in a case of that kind? Is a man to make the best bargain for himself which the law permits; or are contracts to be valid only if countersigned by the National League, or by whatever body takes its place? And can we intrust the enforcement of the law in matters of this sort to the authors of the "No-Rent Manifesto?" It seems to me that it would be no safer to intrust them with that duty, notwithstanding the doctrines they now profess, than to intrust them with another duty on which the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) most eloquently laid great stress the other night—namely, the eradication from the minds of the people of that deep-rooted feeling that it is justifiable to have an unwritten code running alongside of the Constitutional law. The hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. W. O'Brien) has referred in glowing terms to what Lord Spencer said at Newcastle; but what Lord Spencer did say was that though the Irish Members had not been privy to outrage, as far as he knew, yet they had maintained silence in regard to crime at a time when speech would have been golden. Be it remembered that this unwritten code proceeds from the very men of whom this is the best that can be said. They may have looked upon crime and outrage as regrettable incidents; but on more than one occasion they have abstained till too late from denouncing them as they might have done. If the Irish Members of the new Parliament are to cope with all the tasks which may be imposed upon them, it is likely enough that they may not care to come over and take part in the deliberations of the House of Commons at Westminster. The Prime Minister has made a statement on that subject this evening; but, as far as I can judge, there would still remain considerable difficulties. I will take two points only. I do not think the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman would meet the difficulties which might arise as to military affairs, or as to foreign affairs. This is the only country in Europe where a system of compulsory service in the Army does not prevail. Although the power exists of enforcing the ballot for service in the Militia, it has long been dormant. Under the new arrangement Ireland is not to contribute anything beyond its fixed quota for wars; and is it not possible that the English people may say—"It is bad enough to have to find nearly all the treasure for this war; but there is no reason why we should find all the blood for it as well." Recruiting in Ireland has not been very flourishing for some years, and I doubt very much whether it is likely to increase for some years to come. In times gone by thousands of brave men from Ireland fought in our Army, and an eloquent and distinguished Irishman in this House repudiated on their behalf the term of alien when it was applied to them. Now that they are to become aliens and mercenaries in reality the recruiting is likely enough to fall off. But there is nothing in this measure, as far as I can see, to prevent the English House of Commons from reviving compulsory military service in this country, and compelling Irishmen to serve in the English Army whether they like it or not; and although, perhaps, no such necessity may arise, it is one which will always be possible under the stress of a great foreign war. Then, again, as to foreign affairs, the proposed constitution of Ireland would expose us to the same danger which already exists in our Colonies, where excessive zeal on the part of some of the citizens, or want of attention on the part of the Executive, may embroil us in far-reaching complications with a foreign country. In our Colonies, it is true—thanks to the affectionate loyalty of their inhabitants, the happy-go-lucky system has worked tolerably well; but is it desirable to extend that system to a country, the leading men of which have hitherto been ostentatiously disloyal? Federation is a goal to which I hope we shall one day attain; but it seems to me that we should be only putting an obstacle in the way of federation, instead of promoting it, if we make governors of Ireland men whose influence would disappear if they ceased to be disloyal, and if we were to establish close to our shores a Tributary, whose "uncrowned King" has already taken an opportunity of protesting against the tribute, and a Dependency, a large section of whose people have always hitherto declared themselves to be in favour of independence.

MR. LEWIS (Londonderry): Without reference to anything else, I think I am entitled, after the speech we have heard from a so-called Protestant Representative from Ulster, to ask the indulgence of the House while I endeavour to give what I believe to be the true opinion of Loyalist and Protestant Ulster in reference to this Bill. The hon. Member for West Clare (Mr. Jordan), who spoke so much to the entertainment of the House, is perfectly well known to the North of Ireland; but I do not think that anybody there would look upon him as a representative either of Protestantism or of loyalty. It is a piece of singular good fortune, both for the measure itself and the country, that hardly any measure has ever received such ample and broad discussion both inside and outside the House. Speaking on behalf of the Protestant and loyal minority in Ireland, I may say that they are deeply indebted to three Members of the Party opposite for the extreme care and diligence they have taken to point out the real defects and demerits of the Bill. The noble Marques the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) and the right hon. Members for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) and East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) are entitled to and will receive the thanks of the Loyalists of Ireland for the clear and exhaustive way in which they have exposed what are the real defects of this Bill. Hitherto the question with reference to Home Rule has always been—What is it; what does it mean; how is it to be interpreted? We certainly expect to understand what Home Rule is when we have a Bill presented to us from a so-called united Cabinet. The Prime Minister has said we have to deal not only with a determined Ministry, but with an intelligible plan. But the House and the country have reason to complain that there is nothing like determination on the part of the Ministry, and nothing like intelligibility in the plan. The House and the country have viewed with amazement a great statesman, who for years past has set up his back against abstract Resolutions, committing the extraordinary offence of first proposing a Bill and then an abstract Resolution, because that is the result of the right hon. Gentleman's speech to-night. Notwithstanding the breadth of the discussion which has taken place in regard to this Bill, it appears to me that there is one point which has been almost entirely overlooked which is of a most important practical nature. We have heard much about the results of the Union to this and that religious party, to loyalty towards England, and with regard to foreign countries; but no one has taken the trouble to inform the House what has been the result of the Union as regards the prosperity and progress of Ireland. I will give a few figures which I have borrowed from the Prime Minister himself. They appear to be accurate, and they refer to two periods since the Union and after the Famine. I will first take shipping, and I find that the tonnage inwards between 1854 and 1884 shows an increase upon the tonnage inwards of 1854 of 120 per cent. The tonnage outwards in the same period of 30 years showed an increase of 193 per cent. In savings banks, between 1851 and 1884, there was an increase of 244 per cent. If we proceed to stock, we shall find that the value—between 1852 and 1885—of cattle, sheep, and pigs rose from £30,000,000 to nearly £60,000,000, and showed an increase of 97 per cent; and I must remind the House that during that period the population had greatly declined. Notwithstanding that decline, from 6,500,000 in 1851 to 5,000,000 in 1883, there was this vast increase in the wealth of the country. I now come to the social condition of the people; and, first, as to their habitations. In the Census Returns of Ireland the house accommodation is divided into four classes. In the 30 years from 1851 to 1881 the increase in the first-class house accommodation was from 39,000 to 96,000, or an increase of about 140 per cent; in the second-class the increase was from 202,000 to 467,000, or more than 100 per cent; while in the third and fourth classes, consisting of the small tenements and mud huts, which were occupied under insufficient sanitary arrangements, there was a great declension. So much was that the result, that while in 1851 there were 873,000 families living in the poorer houses placed in these classes, or 72 per cent of the whole, with little more than 27 per cent living in the better class of houses, by 1881 the number had immensely diminished, so that while 43 per cent of the population lived in the poorer houses, 56 per cent lived in those placed in the higher classes. Do not these figures prove that the prosperity of Ireland has increased under the Union? I might go through a vast number of other items, all of which show a similarly important result, but

I will only name the heads of them. The commercial returns show that the money invested was two and a-half times greater than it was in 1852; that the available capital measured by the contents of the deposit banks increased 2¾ per cent; and that the Revenue of the country was greater in 1885 by 1¾ per cent than it was in 1882, and that it had increased in a greater ratio than that of the rest of the United Kingdom. A strong feeling pervades the minds of a good many people that Ireland has suffered greatly from the depreciation in the value of agricultural produce. It is conceded that Ireland is an agricultural country, and having regard to the fall in the price of cereals, it is suggested that the Irish people must have fallen into a state of great wretchedness and misery. But is the House aware of the ridiculously small extent to which wheat is grown in Ireland as compared with England. I am in a position to give the figures. Out of 5,000,000 acres under crop in 1885, only 71,000 were under wheat; in other words, for every acre of wheat grown in Ireland in 1885, 70 acres were under other crops. If you compare that with the position of affairs in England, you will find that whereas the great decrease in the price of wheat resulted in great depression and disaster to the agricultural classes in England, the result in Ireland was insignificant. The acreage under barley was equally small. It is quite true that a great deal of land has been under oats, in which there has not been the same decrease of price; and as the value of straw has largely increased, the effect of the depression in the prices of cereals has been insignificant and does not detract from the value of the figures I have quoted as a proof of the national prosperity of the country. Statistics show that, instead of trade and commerce and general prosperity being depreciated by the operations of the Union, they have been fostered and encouraged to a marvellous degree. Let me ask the House to consider some figures in reference to the period before the Union, which, to my mind, are of great importance in regard to many items of production, and are to be found in the document which the Prime Minister has laid upon the Table. During the last five years of Grattan's Parliament, as compared with the preceding five years, there was a declension in articles of production, in some cases to the extent of 30 and 40 per cent. So, also, with regard to the tonnage statistics, which since the Union have greatly increased. The amount of sugar entered for home consumption has also increased greatly, together with wine, malt, and whisky; and another notable fact is that the National Debt, which was only £2,500,000 in 1791, increased to £25,000,000 by the end of the century under Grattan's Parliament. I would ask hon. Members who have followed me in these statistics to say whether I am not justified in maintaining that under the Union the commercial and trading prosperity of the country has increased? The figures which I have ventured to quote show that instead of the trade and general commerce having depreciated under the Union they have been fostered and encouraged. I will now pass on to other topics. What has been put forward as the prominent reason for the introduction of the Bill? It is the fact that 85 Nationalist Members were returned from Ireland demanding Home Rule. I am prepared to contend that although these 85 Members may represent a very large number of people in Ireland, they do not represent the majority of the people; still less do they represent the majority of the intelligent people of the country. I will venture to ask how were these Members elected? What amount of priestly tyranny was exercised in bringing them here to Parliament; what amount of National League oppression was brought into operation in order to get the voters to the poll; and what amount of actual ignorance was exhibited by large numbers of voters on the Nationalist side? A most important and interesting Return was placed upon the Table and circulated last Saturday. It shows that 98,000 illiterate voters recorded their votes at the last General Election in Ireland. In other words, one in five of the entire number of voters in the contested elections in Ireland were found to be illiterate. That is not the whole of the case. From the experience which I have had in my own county, and from inquiries which I have made in adjoining counties, I know that hon. Members may take it that of these 98,000 illiterate voters 90,000 polled for Nationalist candidates. What is the result? Enough voters polled for Nationalist candidates to make their numbers in this House more than four to one. This state of things must bear one or two interpretations. Either these men were made to go up, as I believe was generally the case in the county of Donegal, and declare themselves to be illiterate because they were not to be trusted to poll without a priest or a National agent being with them, or else these men were of such stolid and dense ignorance that they could not work out the simple problem of polling, though marked out for them on a printed paper. Then, taking the county of Donegal, in three out of its four constituences 8,424 persons in that single county actually went up and voted as illiterates out of 13,748 who polled for the Nationalist candidate; in other words, nearly two-thirds of the voters who sent three out of the 85 Nationalist Members to Parliament from the county of Donegal were unable to read or write. In the City of Derry how many voters polled for my hon. Friend the Member for North Longford (Mr. Justin M'Carthy)? Out of 1,795 voters for the Nationalist candidate 635 were illiterates, or more than one in three, and that too in a city which has all the advantages of social life, business habits, and education. More than one in three of the supporters of the Nationalist candidate had to go up to the poll and vote as illiterates. Now, is it to be wondered at that we who represent the Protestant, loyal, educated, and intelligent classes, who have been always true to our Queen and country, to the Constitution and laws under which we live, should ask the House, and the country through the House, not to pay any regard to this mechanical return of 85 Members from Ireland, or to suppose that you have by that process obtained any true representation of the principles held by the majority of the law-abiding people of Ireland? There is one reason which has been put forward by the Prime Minister, and it is one upon which the Chief Secretary for Ireland is in the habit of relying, and that is the helpless state of government and law and order in Ireland. That, in point of fact, has been put forward from time to time to justify the carrying out of measures which are to destroy some of our dearest rights and some of our most cherished privileges. Sir, we have been told about coercion, and it is said that 56 Acts of a coercive character have been passed since the Union. Well, Sir, it has struck me, and I believe, that the passing of so many Acts was the result and the evidence of misplaced and foolish lenity on the part of Parliament; and, in my opinion, instead of passing an Act for one, two, or three years, and renewing it on expiry, the common-sense course would have been to pass a general Act—[*Ironical cheers*]—yes, and when its non-necessity was demonstrated to have repealed it; and am satisfied that if that had been done we should have been spared all this nonsense about the matter. Connected with this subject there is a point to which I desire to refer, inasmuch as it involves a matter personal to myself. The right hon. Gentleman intimated that one, if not the proximate, reason for the introduction of the Bill was the conduct of the late Ministry with reference to the Coercion Act last year. I say that no man in the country took a plainer course than I did with regard to that matter; I totally disagreed with the conduct of the late Conservative Government in refusing to renew the Crimes Act; and it was with the greatest pain and personal distress that I separated myself from their action on that occasion. [*A laugh.*] The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland laughs; but I think he has sometimes taken a course different from that of his Colleagues, and I see no reason why he should laugh at my taking the definite line which I did take. It is well known that I expressed my regret at the time, and I still regret the course taken by right hon. Gentlemen below me; but it does not lie in the mouth of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland to taunt the Conservative Ministry, for we had constant dilly-dallying before their Predecessors left Office and bequeathed to them, in June, 1885, the impossible legacy of passing the Crimes Bill. This passage of history, however, is closed. As I have said, I regretted, and still regret, the course pursued by the late Government; but I am not now going to strike a blow at them on that account, when their conduct is made an excuse for a measure to surrender Ireland to disorder and rapine. We have precedents, of course, cited in support of this Bill, and among them there was one which, probably owing to the abstruseness of the subject and the smallness of the Kingdoms concerned, did not seem to attract much attention in the House. I refer to the precedent of the Kingdoms of Sweden and Norway. I have received a letter from a gentleman in Sweden who has held Office in the Ministry of Norway, to the effect that there is no parallel between the relations of Sweden and Norway and those between England and Ireland; that between Sweden and Norway there is no hate of race, no difference of religion, no century of oppression and blood souvenirs, and that in the attitude of these two countries to each other there is no atom of resemblance to the state of things in England and Ireland; and yet he adds that, in spite of the apparent harmony and the total absence of conflicting interests, the union between Sweden and Norway is so delicate that it requires the greatest caution and care to keep the two nations together. Now, I venture to suggest, seeing that we are on the subject of precedents, that this letter opens up most important considerations against our blindly following a mere precedent which has the appearance of similarity, but is essentially very different from the present case. Now, with reference to the changes contemplated by the Bill. No matter how long Ireland may have had a Parliament, she has never had a separate Executive. This is the first time it has ever been proposed that Ireland should have an Executive separate from England. What does that mean? Does it mean that the same spirit, the same ends, the same loyal Constitutional views will be the guides of the Irish Executive, as they have always been the guides of the Imperial Executive? What do we say will be the result in Ulster? We do not hesitate to say that education there will be distinctly Romanized, and that although Church endowment is not provided by this Bill there is nothing in the Bill to prevent annual endowments being made to the Roman Catholic Church which we shall have to pay for. A constituent of mine said to me a short time ago—"We, the prosperous citizens of Ulster, will have to pay for this"—Protestant Ulster, loyal Ulster, which already pays three-fourths of the entire taxation of Ireland. Another result will be that we shall have new Judges, new magistrates, new policemen, under the control of a Nationalist Parliament, which will be a mere reflection of the National League. All the useful control of the Local Government Board in Ireland, which now prevents so much injustice being done, will be destroyed, and the country will be placed at the feet of another Local Government Board, of which I suppose some hon. Member below the Gangway will be the well-paid head. But under this new *régime* will assistance be forthcoming from the police for the enforcement of contracts; does the House believe that the assistance of the police will be easily obtainable for the purpose of enforcing either special duties or ordinary obligations? Well, Sir, we in Ulster believe that upon all these points there will be a desertion of the Loyalists, and that they will be unable to obtain even ordinary justice. I invite the House to consider the serious risk they run of destroying the prosperity of such a city as Derry. Within the last 40 years—long since the Union—a large industry known as the shirt industry has grown up there; it is carried on principally at four large establishments, the proprietors of which are either Englishmen or Scotchmen, and the money which started this industry came from England and Scotland. Now, what do these proprietors do for Derry? They distribute £3,500 a-week in wages amongst the lower orders, employing, as they do, 4,000 persons, the majority of whom are Roman Catholics, although the proprietors are Protestants. Is it probable that this industry, which has made Derry a veritable hive of prosperous activity, will receive fair play, or that it will be maintained if this Parliament is to be instituted, with all its powers of taxation, which will be brought to bear on Derry and other places similarly prosperous? What will happen? Why, two of the proprietors I have referred to have manufactories in England, and they will have no difficulty whatever in transferring their businesses to this country. This would undoubtedly be the result of the measure put forward by the right hon. Gentleman if it ever became law. Again, the flax and linen industry at Belfast has been the subject of the gravest threatenings on the part of some hon. Members below the Gangway who would be Representatives in this new Parliament. I was very much struck with one paragraph in the communication of the Prime Minister, in which the National Press Agency was authorized to announce to an astonished world the conversion of the right hon. Gentleman to Home Rule. It is certainly not complimentary to hon. Members below the Gangway, and I do not think they were then quite so much in love with him as they are now. The right hon. Gentleman said in the communication to which I refer—

> "It is not likely that the composition of that Legislature would be at all similar to the present *personnel* of the Irish Party in the House of Commons."

Do hon. Gentlemen from Ireland think that the Prime Minister meant that the representation would be better or worse?

> "As soon as that question is settled—the question of an Irish Legislature—the unity will vanish, and all the sectional differences of the Irish people will re-appear. The forces of intelligence, the wealth and interests of every class of the population will assert themselves, and the Members returned to the Parliament in Dublin will be very different in all respects to those who represent Ireland now. What is it that gives the force of intelligence, the wealth and the interests of every class of the population which will assert themselves and cause the Members returned to the Irish Parliament to be very different from what they are now?"

Complimentary or not, what a warning is conveyed in these words, which were, at all events, suggested by the Prime Minister. But what does the right hon. Gentleman think of the necessity of the change? I must say that I do not admire the right hon. Gentleman as a prophet; but this time he may be right. He says that if he is enabled to eject the Government on this issue he will have a large majority in the House of Commons for his Irish Bill; and he believes that the House of Lords, weighing the gravity of the situation, will not reject it. Well, Sir, I think the House of Lords will not reject the Bill; I do not think they will have the chance of doing so; I think we in the House of Commons are likely to give a very good account of it. Then there was another prophecy of the right hon. Gentleman, who said that there is reasonable expectation that Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen will come round to his view, and that Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, in spite of their present attitude, could not consistently oppose it.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): Those are not the words of the Prime Minister, but of the Central Press.

Mr. LEWIS: I am glad to be instructed by the hon. Gentleman opposite, because he is a lawyer, and knows the effect of evidence given in the presence of a person who does not dispute it. This language is stated as issuing from the Prime Minister. I do not wonder that Gentlemen opposite do not like it. It is a very deplorable thing that this scheme should have been sprung upon the country through the agency of the Press; but I say that the right hon. Gentleman has not contradicted it, and if he were present I do not believe that he would do so now. At this hour I am very anxious to have regard to the time and to the convenience of the House; but I have one or two more observations to make. We have heard a good deal on the subject of guarantees; but I do not think that we ought to pay much regard to the guarantees which are in the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman has declared to us, in words which I have heard at least four or five times applied to Irish affairs, that if we pass this measure everything will be put right in Ireland—that we shall have peace, goodwill, and amity between the two countries. But how long will it be before the right hon. Gentleman will, under the influence of some Divine light, come down and tell us that we must not keep up these conditions, and that we must throw them away as the last rag of British domination in Ireland? Why, Sir, we should be asked to do that probably within three or four years. I desire to refer to another subject which is especially germane to Ulster. I venture to say that never did a statesman of the first rank introduce a Bill of this importance in so reckless a way. The right hon. Gentleman, having said that three propositions had been made with regard to Ulster, threw the whole difficulty, as it were, on the floor of the House of Commons, and told us to pick it up. I ask if that is the way to treat the loyal people of Ulster? I say that we are insulted when we, the minority of Irish Members, numbering only 16 out of the entire representation of Ireland, are asked to formulate a plan which will satisfy you and not be outvoted. We say that the Prime Minister must have felt that this was a matter requiring special treatment; that it was his duty to formulate a plan and propose it with the full sanction and authority of his Ministry; but instead of that the right hon. Gentleman says in effect—"I admit that you are in a bad plight; I admit that you have little hope for the future; but I am not clever enough to find out a remedy by which you may be protected." Now, what is the attitude which Ulster takes up? We do not want any tinkering, or exceptional legislation; we do not want to be invited to form for ourselves a separate Parliament, and desert all the Protestants to be found in the other three Provinces of Ireland. We want to walk with them as members of the same community, as subjects of the same Queen, and by sending Members to the same Parliament. We do not want any pretentious schemes for the purpose of separating us from our fellow-citizens elsewhere. We have been told over and over again by those who advocate this scheme that the weakness of the position of those who oppose it is that they have no alternative. You might as well taunt a soldier defending a citadel with having no alternative, as taunt us who are defending the fortress of our liberty. We have no alternative to propose but a United Empire; there is no other alternative; and I put the matter in this way —you want to break the Union—it is our duty to maintain it; you want to fly before your enemies; we want to defeat them; you propose to bribe the landowners to leave the country so that they should not be despoiled; we prefer to remain in a country which is our own, to take our chance there, and we say—"You shall not turn us out." I am not here to make empty boasts as to what will be done; but I do say that you have not the right to transfer the allegiance of the subjects of the Sovereign of these Realms. We believe that this Bill is only the first step in that direction; and believing that to be the case we, the Representatives of the loyal people of Ulster, without boasting and without threatening, are here to say that we stand by the Standard of England, and that we do not mean it should be taken out of our hands. We ask you to substitute a policy of manliness for one of meanness, a policy of courage for cowardice; and we ask you to forego the base and treacherous course of handing over the government of Ireland to the avowed enemies of the Queen and of the United Kingdom.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Sir Henry James.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *Thursday.*

CROFTERS (SCOTLAND) (No. 2) BILL.

(*Mr. Trevelyan, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.*)

[BILL 200.] THIRD READING.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."—(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. J. B. Balfour.*)

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll): Sir, I wish to say a few words upon this question. On the introduction of the Bill by the right hon. Gentleman the then Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan) I expressed my disappointment with its provisions; but I went on hoping against hope that when we reached the Committee stage some improvement might be made in the Bill, so that it might become a practical measure of some value to those people for whose benefit it was supposed to be introduced. However, as the proceedings in Committee went on, I found that every Amendment in any way tending to extend the scope of the Bill, and especially those Amendments moved or supported by Members who represented the interests of the people concerned, were invariably rejected. I found also that lines of action had been arranged between the two Front Benches for the purpose of carrying the Bill in its original integrity, and I perceived that no Amendment would be accepted by the Government from any quarter, especially from the Representatives of those whom it was intended to benefit. I object to this Bill on several grounds. In the present and in the past, in spite of all the wrong that has been done, there has always existed a remnant of good feeling between the Highland people and their landlords. That remnant of good feeling will be removed by the Bill; and the result will be that although a few people—a small percentage—may derive some benefit from the Act, the mass of the population will become, unfortunately, worse off than they were before. I say that every Amendment which has been moved, especially those put forward by the Representatives of the Highland people, has been treated with contempt on the Treasury Bench. Let the Prime Minister, when he considers this matter, look at the Division Lists on the Crofters Bill, and he will see that the majority of Scottish Members voted for all the Amendments moved by us, and that we were beaten only by the Tory Members and English sporting Members. That has been uniformly the case. Sir, I have no hesitation in saying that one or two more Bills conducted in the same way as this has been will raise a cry in Scotland for Home Rule which will be irresistible. The Bill was introduced in an insufficient form, carried by a league between the two Front Benches, and made worse than useless. I myself have moved Amendments until I was weary of doing so; but not one comma, full stop, or semicolon of them was accepted by the Lord Advocate. Those Amendments were not of an unreasonable character, for in most of the divisions which took place upon them I was supported by 100 Members. This Bill was introduced ostensibly for the purpose of promoting the extension of the population in these districts. But I say that will not be the result. With all its restrictions, in the absence of the good feeling which has existed and in face of the statutory regulations which exist, I say that the result will be that in a short time the Highland people will be exterminated. The present Government is behind the House of Commons and the country in this matter, and they are behind the views of the right hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill. If the Bill could be thrown out by my vote I would reject it without the slightest hesitation, and trust, if you like, to agitation to produce a better measure. But I tell those interested in sporting, for whose interest the Bill was mainly introduced, that sport, especially deer-stalking, can exist only by the toleration of the people, whose interests must be considered, because if they are not deer forests will vanish from Scotland. Sir, I feel so strongly on this question that I consider it my duty to divide the House against the Motion for the third reading of the Bill.

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): Sir, I rise to support the observations of my hon. Friend the Member for Argyll. I myself am aware of the inflexible rule laid down not to accept any substantial Amendment to the Bill. This measure has been considered by the Highland people and by various Associations in the Highlands, and in no case have the resolutions passed upon it been otherwise than condemnatory. I have received communications from those sources asking us in the most peremptory manner to divide the House against the Bill. May I ask the attention of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate to this one fact? We, on these Benches, asked the right hon. and learned Gentleman to allow crofters holding under leases to be admitted to the benefits of the Bill. The right hon. and learned Gentleman refused to do so, and what is the result? The result is that many landlords are now insisting on their tenants taking leases in order that they may place themselves beyond the provisions of the Bill. Although those crofters had no leases they have been compelled to sign leases, and this occurred as late as Saturday last in the case of the largest landholder in the county of Inverness. I draw the attention of the Lord Advocate to that fact, in the hope that if it is not too late a provision may be introduced in the House of Lords to the effect that leases entered into within six months of the passing of this Bill shall not exclude tenants from the benefits of the Bill.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): Sir, both the hon. Members who have spoken to this Motion have reiterated the allegation made in Committee that there existed an agreement between the two Front Benches with reference to this Bill. It is true that the Government rejected many Amendments made by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway; but, on the other hand, I must point out that they resisted all the Amendments made on this side of the House, some of which I regard as of great, if not vital, importance. I will just refer to one other matter touched upon in the speech of the hon. Member for Argyll. The hon. Member said that the result of the Bill would be that the condition of the mass of the population in the Highlands would be worse than it was before. And why? Because the kindly feeling which has existed between the landlords and the tenants would be destroyed, and the distress of the tenants thereby greatly aggravated. When the hon. Gentleman says that the condition of the population in the Highlands will not be improved by this Bill I largely agree with him; because I have always asserted that it is not by any mere manipulation of the Land Laws that this result is to be attained. But when the hon. Member says that this Bill will injure the tenants by destroying the kindly feeling which at present exists between them and their landlords, can there be a severer condemnation of all the main provisions of the measure? Is not the whole Bill founded on the theory that the tenants must be protected from the tyranny of the landowners? I hope little from this Bill as regards the material prosperity of the crofters. In itself it is, for the most part, useless, or worse than useless. But if it be the prelude to action on the part of the Executive, which shall put an end to that melancholy state of social disorder in the Highlands which, so long as it lasts, is a bar to any improvement in the condition of the people, it will not have been passed in vain.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): Sir, I rise to support the protests of the hon. Members for Argyll and Inverness against the Bill, which, I am convinced, will prove to be no settlement whatever of this question of the Highlands, and will do little or nothing to improve the social condition of the people in the Western Highlands, which has been so great a cause of anxiety to Her Majesty's Government. When the Bill was introduced by the then Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan), the right hon. Gentleman enunciated principles of great value, and which, had they been applied, would have tended greatly to improve the condition of the people. But as the discussion in Committee proceeded it was manifest that the scope of the Bill was too narrow to allow those who were most in need of assistance to be benefited by it. The Bill is limited in its provisions to so small a number of people that I say it is unworthy of the time which the House of Commons has bestowed upon it. It will not in any sense, in my opinion, effect an improvement in the condition of the people of the Highlands; and I think that hon. Members who more particularly represent the districts concerned will be perfectly justified in taking a division on the Motion for the third reading, in order to show that they do not accept the Bill as a settlement of the question, and that they consider the Government to have failed to satisfy the just expectation raised at the commencement of this legislation.

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I made my protest when this Bill was first introduced in the House, and at various times during the debate. My suggestions were not accepted by Her Majesty's Government. Had they been, I think the Bill would have been very much improved, and it would have given far greater satisfaction to some of those Gentlemen who sit below the Gangway than it does at present. But I cannot refrain from saying that Her Majesty's Government—and, if I may particularize, especially the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour)—gave great attention to the Bill, and took great pains with it. The right hon. and learned Gentleman exhibited the very greatest patience, and endeavoured to meet hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway in a very fair and conscientious spirit. There is one point I wish to impress upon the Government, and that is that in the event of this Bill becoming law—and I have no doubt that practically it will in a few moments—I hope they will see it is properly carried out. It is one thing to pass a Bill in the House of Commons, and another thing to see that it is carried out. When we consider the condition of many parts of the Western Highlands, and the great difficulty experienced there in getting rents and in satisfying the people, we must feel that when this House has spent many days and weeks in maturing a measure, it is important that that measure should be justly and properly administered.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I do not intend to resume the debate upon this Bill, which has already been very prolonged; but there are one or two points in regard to which I should like to say a word. In the first place, it has been made to appear that in some way or sense this Bill has been narrowed, or made less extensive than when presented to Parliament. The fact is quite the other way. Although the Bill passed the second reading without a division, so anxious were the Government to gather the opinion, not only of the House generally, but especially of the Scottish Members upon it, that my right hon. Friend the late Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Trevelyan) and I availed ourselves of the advantage of a meeting with the Members from Scotland at which the whole of the Bill was discussed; and every Amendment which was put forward or suggested at that meeting, and which seemed to have the prevalent assent of the Scottish Members, was put upon the Paper by the Government and had been carried. I need not enumerate the Amendments that have been adopted, but only say that all of them have been in the direction of widening the scope of the Bill; some of them did so in a very important manner. It is quite a mistake to suppose there has been anything done to narrow the Bill. The Bill was introduced with a particular territorial scope. Its objects have not been limited, but its benefits have been widened by a number of very important Amendments which were agreed to as the Bill passed through Committee. I can only assure the House that there has been every intention and desire on the part of the Government to give the fullest consideration to any Amendment that came from any quarter of the House, because their single endeavour has been to make the Bill as efficient as possible.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 219; Noes 52: Majority 167.—(Div. List, No. 90.)

Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

CUSTOMS AND INLAND REVENUE BILL.

(*Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

[BILL 190.] COMMITTEE.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clauses 1 to 6, inclusive, *agreed to.*

Clause 7 (Assessment of income tax under schedules (A.) and (B) and of the inhabited house duties for the year 1886-7. 32 & 33 Vict. c. 67).

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to move, in page 3, line 32, to leave out the words "poundage of three-halfpence," and insert the word "salary." The two Amendments which I have put upon the Paper on this subject, Sir, simply apply to the abolition of the system of payment by poundage to Income Tax collectors. I think there is a general sentiment throughout the country on this matter which is favourable to this proposal; but in order that there shall be no hardship on the existing collectors, I propose, in my second Amendment, that the salaries paid to them in the future shall be equal to the poundage which they received last year when the Income Tax was as high as it is ever likely to be in ordinary times. It is felt that those who have to make the assessments should not receive payment by results; and I therefore urge that instead of poundage the Government will consent to allow salaries to be paid equal to the poundage paid in the year ending the 6th of April, 1886. Then, in the last line, I wish to insert these words—

> "Provided, That no person be required to pay on a larger sum than he actually receives as rent or otherwise."

I wish to add this Proviso, because, as the Committee is no doubt aware, there are a great number of houses which are assessed at a figure far beyond their letting value. In some cases, warehouses and other premises which are only partially let are assessed, and the rates are demanded upon their total rating. I think there are very strong arguments indeed in favour of the Amendments which I have suggested; and, therefore, I beg to move the alterations to Clause 7 which are down in my name.

Amendment proposed,

> In page 3, line 32, to leave out the words "poundage of three-half pence," and insert the word "salary."—(*Mr. Bartley.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'three-half pence' stand part of the Clause."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby): The hon. Member's Amendments apply to two entirely different matters—one is the question of the payment of collectors by poundage, and the other refers to the basis on which the Income Tax should be levied. With regard to the question of poundage, certainly the Government are not enamoured of the system of paying collectors by poundage; but

I would point out that the late Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Childers) on one occasion made a proposal by which the Income Tax was to be collected by Government officials, who should be paid by salaries; and what was the result? Well, the result of it was that an hon. Gentleman sitting on this side of the House (Mr. Slagg), who at that time represented Manchester, attacked that proposition on behalf of Manchester, and he was joined by the whole forces of the borough Members acting on behalf of the local collectors, and they succeeded in defeating the Government. Since that time a great number of the larger towns of England, including the largest town in England, then represented by Mr. Slagg, have adopted the system of paying the collectors by salary. In point of fact, in most of the principal places in the country the payment of the collectors is at present by salary; and, therefore, we have not thought it necessary to renew the proposal to make the system compulsory; because by experience of the system it is found to be approved of, and is practically coming into operation in a natural way. They are discovering, in all the principal districts, that it is an advantageous system, and it is being generally adopted. Therefore we do not think it is necessary to make it compulsory. At any rate, however, the proposal of the hon. Member would not work satisfactorily, because he proposes to retain the services of the local collectors, and pay them a salary. You might have a local officer and pay him a salary from the locality, or you can have a public officer paid by the State; but I do not see how the Government could keep the local collectors and pay them by salary. No doubt, the system of payment by salary is the better of the two, and I hope that it will soon become the universal system in England; and, although I am not at issue with the hon. Member as to the general principle, I cannot accept his proposal for the reasons which I have given. I do not think that we shall gain anything by trying to force this matter too much, and I trust, therefore, that the hon. Member will not press his Amendment. As to the second Amendment of the hon. Member, I am sorry to say that I cannot accept it, because it is altogether contrary to the principle on which the Income Tax is assessed. The Income Tax is assessed on the value, not on the actual rental, of a building, which may or may not represent the true value. Let me give the Committee an instance. Suppose I have a house which is worth £200 a-year, and I have a friend who is not rich, and I say to him—"You shall have this house for £100." Well, it would obviously not be fair to lower the assessment to £100 a-year. I will give the Committee another illustration. Suppose a house was let on lease for £50 a-year, and in consequence of the increase of trade or of any other reason it became worth £100 a-year, then, surely, it is fair that the tax should be paid at the true annual value. If the true annual value is less than is actually being paid, then the taxpayer will get the benefit; but the only plan on which we can assess property is by finding out what is the true annual letting value of the house. We cannot adopt any other principle than the true annual value, and therefore I cannot accept the Proviso which the hon. Member proposes to move. I hope the hon. Member will think these explanations are satisfactory, and will not press his Amendment to a division.

MR. HICKMAN (Wolverhampton, W.): I am glad to hear from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he does not approve of the principle of poundage in regard to the collection of the Income Tax. I think, however, that the objection applies more to the assessors than to the collectors; because I take it that the collector is furnished with a statement showing the amount to be collected, and has no option whatever as to the amount which he is to collect. But it is very important indeed that the persons who have the assessment of the Income Tax under their control should do it with perfect impartiality; and it is felt to be a very great grievance indeed that such persons should be paid by poundage. I shall be glad to have an assurance from the right hon. Gentleman that such persons shall be paid by salary and not by poundage.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) Wolverhampton, E.): I quite agree with the remarks of the hon. Member who has just sat down; but I would point out that the case which he puts is met by the remarks which fell from my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but with this difference—that my right hon. Friend's observations apply with greater force in regard to assessors, because there are a great many more of them who are at the present time paid by poundage. I should like to explain to the Committee, in reference to poundage, that the collectors do not gain anything by the increase or decrease of the rate of Income Tax, because the poundage varies according to the way in which the Income Tax goes up or goes down. I will give the Committee an illustration in regard to last year. A little time ago, when the Income Tax was low, the poundage was 3½*d.*; whereas last year, in consequence of the increase which had taken place in the tax, the poundage was only 1¾*d.*, so that the amount of poundage received by the collectors is practically uniform. The whole matter has been placed in the hands of the Inland Revenue Department to consider, and I hope the hon. Member will not think it necessary to press his Amendment.

Mr. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich) hoped that the principle of levying Income Tax on the letting value of a house would be given up before long, and for this reason—that some houses had no letting value at all, by reason of their being too large and too expensive.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 149; Noes 19: Majority 130.—(Div. List, No. 91.)

The CHAIRMAN: The next Amendment is also in the name of the hon. Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley); but as it is dependent upon the Amendment which has just been rejected it cannot be put. Does the hon. Member propose to move the third Amendment?

Mr. BARTLEY: No, Sir; I do not propose to press it.

Clause *agreed to.*

Remaining Clauses *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Thursday.*

BURGH POLICE AND HEALTH (SCOTLAND) BILL [*Lords*].—[Bill 194.]

(*The Lord Advocate.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Henry H. Fowler

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. J. B. Balfour.*)

Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I am somewhat surprised that, notwithstanding the request which was made to my right hon. and learned Friend early in the evening, he proposes to ask the House to go on with the second reading of this Bill at 2 o'clock in the morning. I think that it needs no argument to persuade the House not to go on now with a measure containing more than 500 clauses, independently of numerous Schedules, and which was only issued to hon. Members this morning. Those who are interested in the measure have not yet had an opportunity of seeing a copy of the Bill.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I had no reason whatever to expect that there would be any opposition to the second reading of the Bill. The measure has now been before the country for two years, and during two Sessions it has passed through the House of Lords. It has also been submitted to a Select Committee, and its provisions examined with great care. It has now come down to this House with the Amendments which have been introduced into it by the Select Committee and the House of Lords. If, however, it is desired to have further time, I have no objection to postpone the second reading until Monday.

Mr. DALRYMPLE (Ipswich): I think the protest which has been made by the hon. Member for West Edinburgh (Mr. Buchanan) is a very unnecessary one. I am satisfied that if the text of the Bill had been in the hands of hon. Members for a month they would not have looked at it more than they have done now. It is a matter which has already been before the House more than once, and the whole question has been thoroughly discussed in a Select Committee in 1884; and I know of no one whose objections, and even prejudices, were more laboriously considered by the Select Committee than those of the hon. Member. The truth is that this is not a Bill which could possibly be discussed on the second reading. It is entirely a Bill of details, and of details which have been threshed out both in this and in the other House of Parliament.

Mr. J. WILSON (Edinburgh, Central): The Bill was only issued this morning, and cannot reach Edinburgh until to-morrow. It is, therefore, most unreasonable to take it at this hour of the morning; and I feel bound to join in the protest which my hon. Colleague (Mr. Buchanan) has made.

Mr. BUCHANAN: I understood the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate to put off the second reading until Monday.

Mr. SPEAKER: The right hon. and learned Gentleman moved the second reading of the Bill.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt) (Derby): It is for the House to decide what course it is prepared to take. The Government have no desire to press the second reading against the strong feeling of the House. I have known something of the Bill in former days, and I know that it is entirely a Bill of details. My hon. Friend behind me (Mr. J. Wilson) seems to think that it is a case of hasty legislation, or what was once described by Mr. Wyndham as a *coup de main* on the part of the Government. It would, however, be just as fair to talk of a *coup de main* in the case of a Chancery suit. It is impossible to effect a *coup de main* upon a Bill of 500 clauses. At the same time, it is most desirable to have the Bill read a second time, so that we may be able to come to a consideration of the details in Committee. At the present moment there are a considerable number of Scotch Members in the House, and I imagine that they are in favour of going on with the Bill. It is for them to say whether they desire to do so or not.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I hope the Government will not press the second reading of the Bill. It is a very important Bill, and has excited in bygone years a considerable amount of controversy. It contains a variety of principles, and when it was last before the House it was referred to a Select Committee, and the manner in which it was gone into by that Committee certainly excited much controversy in Scotland. A majority of the Members of that Committee are not now Members of this House. A new House has sprung into existence, and I certainly do not think the Lord Advocate would lose much by acceding to the request of my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Buchanan) that the Bill shall be postponed until, at all events, our constituents shall have had an opportunity of making themselves acquainted with the nature of its provisions. I think the debate ought to be adjourned.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member move the adjournment of the debate?

Dr. CAMERON: Yes; I will move that the debate be now adjourned.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*Dr. Cameron.*)

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): The Government have no objection.

Motion *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *Monday* next.

TERMS OF REMOVAL (SCOTLAND) BILL.

(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.*)

[BILL 187.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I do not propose, Sir, to do anything more now than to move that you leave the Chair. The Bill has been brought in in compliance with an universal desire; and if you now leave the Chair I intend to put off the Committee stage for a week or a fortnight, or until such time as may be considered most convenient.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. J. B. Balfour.*)

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman will allow a little time for the consideration of the matter. It involves questions of very great importance to Scotland; and if the right hon. and learned Gentleman will give some assurance that there will be several weeks' delay before proceeding with Committee, I think there will be no objection to getting the Speaker out of the Chair.

The LORD ADVOCATE: The Bill was before the county meetings on the 30th of April, and was fully considered then.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): Will the Lord Advocate be good enough to say whether this Bill applies to counties?

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: It certainly does; that is one of the main objects of the Bill.

MR. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): Sir, I respectfully suggest to my right hon. and learned Friend that he should not go into Committee on this Bill now. It is not like the Police Bill, about which no representations were made; very serious representations have been made against it; and I must certainly oppose the Motion for your leaving the Chair.

Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 113; Noes 28: Majority 85.—(Div. List, No. 92.)

Bill *considered* in Committee.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Monday* 24th May.

SUPPLY [3RD MAY].—REPORT.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [6th May], "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution:"—

(25.) "That a sum, not exceeding £58,921, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Courts of Law and Justice in Scotland, and other Legal Charges."

Question again proposed.

Debate *resumed.*

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): Sir, as it was on my Motion that this Resolution was formerly adjourned, my objection being to its having come on at so early an hour, I wish to say that I shall offer no further opposition to it, and that it is my intention to bring up the subject in another form.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): As my hon. Friend has withdrawn his opposition to this Resolution I do the same; but I trust that he will fulfil his intention of bringing up the matter in another form. As we have not got the Report which has been published of Sheriff Ivory, I hope we shall have an opportunity of considering it in a convenient shape.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

MOTION.

TRAMWAYS PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Charles Acland, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under "The Tramways Act, 1870," relating to Bradford Corporation Tramways, Burnley and District Tramways, Drypool and Marfleet Steam Tramways, City of Oxford and District Tramways, and Stratford, Ilford, and Romford Tramways, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Charles Acland and Mr. Mundella.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 208.]

House adjourned at a quarter after Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 11*th May,* 1886.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2) * (95).

Second Reading—Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham) (59).

Committee—Report—Metropolitan Police Stations * (87).

Withdrawn — Salmon Fisheries Amendment (Scotland) (30).

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS — *First Reading* — Elementary Education Confirmation (Birmingham) * (96); Elementary Education Confirmation (London) * (97).

Committee — Report — Metropolitan Commons * (71).

SALMON FISHERIES AMENDMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 30.)

(*The Marquess of Huntly.*)

(NO. 30.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE MARQUESS OF HUNTLY, in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that when he presented it to their Lordships' House prior to the Easter Recess he stated that if it were their Lordships' pleasure to give it a second reading he should then ask them to refer it to a Select Committee. He felt the great responsibility devolving upon a private Member in bringing forward any measure connected with this very large and intricate subject—a subject involving a great amount of public interest, and upon which he regretted to say there was a needless difference of opinion. The great interest that was felt in the matter was testified to by the fact that he had that day had the honour of presenting to their Lordships Petitions from the representatives of 11 of the largest salmon river districts having Fishery Boards in Scotland, all praying that their Lordships would take the course he proposed; and he had also presented a Petition from the two Associations in Scotland, formed for the purpose of improving the fisheries, praying that the Bill might be allowed to be sent to a Select Committee, and they agreed with the general lines of the legislation proposed by him. He had not sent to the public prints any of the Petitions in favour of his Bill; but he had noticed that the Memorials presented against it were always printed in the local papers, so that he had the advantage of seeing what those opposed to him said. He saw that the principal charge brought against him was that his Bill was conceived entirely in the interests of sport, and in the interest of the fishing rod. He was not altogether insensible to the interests of sport, and was, indeed, a student of the gentle art; but his Bill was not framed with the selfish object attributed to it. He disclaimed the impeachment, and assured their Lordships that his desire, and the desire of all those who acted with him in this matter, was entirely in the public interest. He would explain, as briefly as possible, his case, and he hoped to show to their Lordships that he rested his case entirely on public grounds, and he should avoid any allusion to those rather regrettable contests which had raged between the different proprietors—those situated on the coast along the mouth of a river, in the tidal waters of a river, in the middle parts, and in the upper waters. He held that all these interests were really identical, but with this qualification—that they were subservient to the great public interest of securing the largest and best supply of salmon. He would point out that that was a matter of which there was plenty of data upon which their Lordships could form an opinion. After inquiries by a special Committee of their Lordships' House in 1860, and by a Committee of the other House in 1861, an Act was passed in 1862, which was extended by an Act in 1868. These two Acts regulated the salmon fisheries in Scotland, except those of the Tweed and the rivers flowing into the Solway, for which there were special Acts. After some agitation in 1870, special Commissioners were appointed to inquire into the working of these Acts, and the late Mr. Buckland and Mr. Archibald Young were appointed as such. They reported to Parliament on 23 points in which these Acts should, in their opinion, be amended—one being with respect to close time, both yearly and weekly; another with respect to restrictions as to stake-nets and fixed engines in the sea and at the mouths of rivers; and a third as to the removal of natural and artificial obstructions in rivers. Those recommendations were made in 1871, and people who were interested in salmon fishing hoped every day that something would be done to carry them out. It had, he believed, been promised and shadowed forth on several occasions that there should be legislation on the subject; but nothing, however, had been done, and it was not until 1882 that a step was taken in a certain direction. At the end of the Session of that year his noble Friend the present Foreign Secretary (the Earl of Rosebery) brought forward a measure to create the present Fishery Board for Scotland, and to place the salmon fisheries of Scotland under the superintendence of that Board. He (the Marquess of Huntly) cheerfully bore testimony to the very excellent work connected with the fisheries in Scotland which the Fishery Board had performed. Under the provisions of the Fishery Board Act, the Board appointed Mr. Young as Inspector of Salmon Fisheries, and instructed him to go round every salmon river in Scotland and to make a special Report upon it; and he thought every Scotsman would agree with him that the excellence of these Reports, and the care, the assiduity, and the attention which Mr. Young had paid to the matter, were deserving of the greatest credit. Further, the map that was presented with the Report, showing the extent of the fisheries in Scotland, was one of the most valuable ever presented to Parliament. Mr. Young, in his Reports, took up the thread of the Report of the Commissioners of 1871. He had gone round each river in Scotland, and he confirmed almost exactly, in all particulars, the representations of the Commission of 1871. Strictly upon these Reports the Bill he now brought forward was framed.

He (the Marquess of Huntly) had been told that he ought to have brought in a Bill of his own; but he preferred to cover, as far as he could, all the important recommendations of the Commissioners of 1871, as confirmed by Mr. Young's Reports. In the first place, the Bill rested upon an enlarged constitution and extended powers of the District Boards, and this was provided for in Clauses 8 to 16. The object was to make these Boards fairly representative of all the interests within their respective districts. The Bill proceeded on the same lines as the English and Irish Salmon Acts. Having enlarged the constitution and representation of these Boards, he proposed to give them larger powers, which included powers to rent, lease, or purchase cruives and nets; to establish and maintain hatcheries; to rent, lease, or purchase lands; to make regulations as to the use of gaffs; to issue annual licences for the use of cruives, nets, and rods on payment of duties, &c., as fixed by the Secretary for Scotland; and to levy assessments for debts contracted by the District Boards. He had seen the provision as to the issue of licences criticized; but in England that was a source of great profit and emolument to the Fishery Boards, and he could not see any objection to the proposal. He then proposed to give the District Boards the same powers to deal with the abatement of pollution as riparian owners had, and also a right to sue for the removal of obstructions to the passage of salmon in rivers and estuaries. That the right ought to be possessed by District Boards was evident to anyone who had studied the Report of Mr. Young, who computed the extent of water at present barred to the ascent of salmon at between 500 and 600 miles. For the purpose of enabling the District Boards to defray the expenses which they would incur in carrying into execution the provisions of the Bill, power was given them to levy assessments. He now came to a point of the Bill as to which he believed there was strong objection. Section 6 proposed to alter the weekly close time from 36 hours to 48, and also gave power to the Secretary for Scotland to vary the commencement of the close time in any district after inquiry. He had been told such an alteration would be the ruin of the coast proprietors; but he would remind their Lordships that England and Ireland had pretty much the same arrangement as he proposed. In England the weekly close time was 42 hours, extendable to 48, and in Ireland it was fixed at 48. It would be absurd were he to propose legislation contrary to the Commissioners' Reports, in which it would be found that the unanimous recommendation was 48 hours. Some people, however, thought that time too long; and in the Select Committee, to which he trusted the House would consent to refer the Bill, their objections might be considered with a view to a definitive settlement of the question. There was also a proposal to provide an annual close time for trout and char. Another proposal which had excited opposition was that contained in Clause 19, which abolished the stake or bag-nets near the river mouth; and by Clause 20 it was proposed to give the Secretary for Scotland power to issue regulations for the purpose of limiting the number of nets which might be placed at the mouths of rivers. The latter provision was rendered necessary by the enormous increase in recent years in the number of nets set up in the sea; it was a question which had hitherto been really slurred over, and he thought it should be faced and finally settled. It was not his desire in any way to injure the property or rights of anyone; but, looking at the questions involved as affecting the general body of the community, he thought Parliament should step in to prevent any injurious action being taken by one proprietor against another. He would be told, no doubt, that the present law was sufficient to deal with all the cases that might arise; but he thought it would be easy of conclusive proof that it was not sufficient. He had read several characteristic letters from upper and other proprietors on the subject; and, having regard to all the circumstances, it was clear that some further legislation was necessary. He would repeat his regret that the matter had not been taken up by the Government; but he believed the Secretary for Scotland would be sufficiently impressed with the necessity for further action, and that he would be disposed to agree to the Bill being referred to a Select Committee, where he hoped they would be able satisfactorily to arrange the matter. The Bill aimed at securing the public interest, and though he had heard that a Party Whip had been issued he could not see how it could in any sense be regarded as a Party question. He begged to move the second reading of the Bill.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Marquess of Huntly.*)

LORD BALFOUR, in moving that the Bill be read a second time that day six months, said, he would ask their Lordships not to give the Bill a second reading, in spite of the suggestion of the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Huntly) that the Bill should afterwards be referred to a Select Committee. In saying that he (Lord Balfour) did not say that he was against all amendment of the present law; but he believed he should be able to show that there were in the Bill provisions that it would be most unwise for the House to appear to sanction, as they would do by reading it a second time. The noble Marquess disclaimed any idea or supposition that he was desirous to legislate in favour of one class of proprietors more than another. He (Lord Balfour) could not but think that the noble Marquess, in making that disclaimer, admitted that there was some ground for suspicion. All he could say was, he thought it would puzzle the noble Marquess to point to one provision in the Bill which was not in the interests of the upper proprietors, and to some extent hostile to the proprietors in other parts of the rivers. All previous legislation in regard to the taking and catching of salmon had been framed with the view of reconciling the conflict of interests between different classes. On all rivers there was a conflict of interests between upper and lower proprietors; and in the case of the Tay and Tweed this was complicated by a conflict of interests with what were called the middle proprietors, whose interests were different from, and to some extent hostile to, those of other proprietors. The ruling Acts in Scotland in regard to salmon fisheries were the Acts of 1862 and 1868; and his position was this—he maintained that if any alteration was to be made in the provisions of these Acts it should only be done on the initiative of the Government, and after a careful and exhaustive inquiry conducted by an impartial tribunal, and having regard to the different interests concerned. There was considerable agitation and conflict between the different classes of proprietors and various interests before the Act of 1862 was passed. An exhaustive inquiry was undertaken, and, after all, the settlement then arrived at was in the nature of a compromise. Like many other compromises, he did not suppose it altogether satisfied all parties; but they had been living under it for nearly 25 years, and a settlement like that should not be lightly disturbed, or, at all events, ought not to be disturbed in the interests of one class of proprietors more than another. He was not prepared to say that, after this lapse of time, there were not points in which that settlement might not with advantage be re-opened; but his position was that that should not be done at the instance of a private Member of either House of Parliament, and that it was not sufficient to introduce such a Bill, and ask for a second reading on a promise to move that it be referred to a Select Committee. A matter of that importance could only be dealt with adequately by the Government of the day, on the recommendation of the Fishery Board of Scotland, which was brought into existence a few years ago. He considered the Bill an entirely one-sided one in its character, and that its provisions were in flagrant disregard of the interests of all, except those who were purely upper proprietors, and, if he might so call it, the rod-fishing interest. He was not prepared to say there were not clauses in the Bill which might be useful and might be accepted; but he would like to show their Lordships how some interests were proposed to be dealt with. The interests of riparian proprietors and the public were altogether neglected, as were also those of the lessees of the lower river and sea fisheries. The Bill handed over natural obstructions in a river to the mercies of the District Board, while the proprietor was to have no right at all in the matter. These natural obstructions, which, in most cases, were natural beauties of the scenery, were to be dealt with for the construction of salmon ladders. There were some cases in which it was impossible to make salmon ladders without wholly destroying the natural beauty of the place. He would cite one instance in which a District Board proposed to deal with a well-known bit of scenery. The Tay District Board, in whose jurisdiction the Falls of Tummel lay, had told them exactly what they wished to do with regard to these Falls. In a Report of two years ago they had suggested the building of a rough wall rising above the line of high water. That meant the line of winter flood, whereas most people went to see the Falls in the summer, when the water was at its lowest level. Not content with this the District Board still further piled up their horrors, because they promised to make the wall an imitation of the natural rock. He presumed that that meant an erection of cement and stucco, with, perhaps, imitation ferns stuck on it. He did not know whether any of their Lordships had seen the Falls of Tummel; but if they had, he did not think they would readily hand over the Falls of Tummel to a District Board, to be destroyed for the mere purpose of making a salmon ladder. He ventured to say that a Bill which handed over the natural beauties of the country to the tender mercies of District Boards would require a good deal more argument than had been devoted to it by the noble Marquess before their Lordships could be induced to assent to the second reading. He did not say that no amendment of the existing law was required; but they had a Fishery Board in Scotland, and he was credibly informed that at the present time the Fishery Board was engaged upon an inquiry with the object of producing a Bill for the amendment of the present law. He, therefore, hoped their Lordships would agree with him in thinking that a matter of this importance was better left to be dealt with, in the first instance, on the authority of a responsible Government, guided by the Fishery Board; and he should be prepared to give a careful and impartial consideration to any proposal which might be made by the Government. In the meantime, he begged to move that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

Amendment *moved*, to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months.")—(*The Lord Balfour.*)

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (The Earl of DALHOUSIE) said, the Government were greatly indebted to the noble Marquess for the great pains he had taken with reference to this question, and for the trouble he had taken in drawing up and introducing into their Lordships' House a Bill dealing with this difficult subject. He was only sorry that the Government had no better way of showing their gratitude to the noble Marquess than by asking their Lordships not to read the Bill a second time. It was an extremely difficult and complicated subject; and the noble Marquess, with every good intention, had passed over some of the difficulties in a somewhat light manner. The noble Marquess had said that the interests of the upper and lower proprietors were identical in the matter; but he (the Earl of Dalhousie) doubted whether the Harbour Commissioners or Town Council of Aberdeen would agree to that, considering that the Bill represented to them a loss of some £30,000. It was to be remembered that there were certain statutory as well as other rights that had to be considered. In pursuance of the Act of 1862, the estuaries of rivers had been defined by Commissioners, and large sums had been invested both by private individuals and Public Bodies in the improvement of fisheries; and if the Bill of the noble Marquess were to pass these rights would be swept away without any compensation whatsoever. Another objection he took to the Bill was this—he readily admitted that some legislation dealing with the salmon fisheries of Scotland was desirable; but he did not think it was desirable to deal with the subject in this piecemeal and amending fashion. There were a great many Salmon Acts, and Her Majesty's Government were desirous that any reform should have a general and consolidating character. On these two grounds he hoped their Lordships would not read the Bill a second time. The subject was one which for several weeks past had occupied the attention of the Government. He had been in communication for some time past with the Fishery Board of Scotland, who had been considering the matter; and he could assure the noble Marquess that it was the intention of the Government at the earliest moment to introduce a Bill dealing with the whole subject.

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND AND GORDON said, that this was a question in which he was largely interested, and it was on account of that interest that he took part in this debate. It was also a subject to which he had devoted a considerable amount of attention; and he thought that he had some practical knowledge of the working of the Acts now in existence. He considered that the Bill of the noble Marquess was one of the most unnecessary and arbitrary interferences with the rights of private property that had ever been proposed in that House. He said that advisedly. In 1862 an Act was passed appointing a Fishery Board, whose special duty it was to look after the salmon fisheries in Scotland. His objection to the measure before the House was very much the same as that of his noble Friend (Lord Balfour). They had a Fishery Board whose duty it was to attend to the salmon fisheries in Scotland; and he submitted that the proposed legislation, if it was necessary, ought to come from the Government of the day, advised by the Fishery Board of Scotland. When they ignored altogether the existence of the Fishery Board, it seemed to him that there was no use for the Act of 1862, and that they had better repeal it at once; but as long as the Act existed they had a responsible Body whose duty it was to deal with these salmon fisheries, and to whom they could apply. He preferred that class of legislation to a measure brought in by one who was so distinctly identified with the upper proprietors, and who was Chairman of the Association of the Upper Proprietors of Scotland. The noble Marquess must feel, to a certain extent at all events, prejudiced in favour of the upper proprietors. In his Bill the noble Marquess took credit for enlarging the powers of the District Boards; but he actually altered the constitution of the District Boards. He proposed to reduce the qualification of the upper proprietors from £20 a-year to £10, and he further proposed to reduce the frontage from half-a-mile to a quarter of a mile. Therefore, they might have persons on the District Board possessing the smallest possible amount of property; and it might happen that a man who had only a quarter of a mile of frontage and was only assessed at £10 a-year might be Chairman of the District Board, and have the casting vote over others who might be interested in the river to the amount of many thousands of pounds. It would be an injustice to those who had a large stake in the river. Another objection he had to the Bill was on account of the enormous power it gave to the Secretary for Scotland. By one stroke of the pen from the Secretary for Scotland a person might be deprived of his property, without the power of appeal and without getting any compensation, such property probably having been in the possession of himself and his ancestors for hundreds of years, and granted by Royal Charter. That was a power that no man ought to have. He hoped their Lordships would refuse to read the Bill a second time.

LORD COLVILLE OF CULROSS, in opposing the Bill, said, he hoped it would be withdrawn.

THE EARL OF CRAWFORD AND BALCARRES suggested that the whole question of the working of the Salmon Acts should be referred to a Select Committee. This would satisfy the promoters, and if it was granted he hoped that the noble Marquess would withdraw the Bill.

THE EARL OF KINTORE said, he agreed with those noble Lords who held the view that the Bill ought not to be read a second time. The Bill would fall by its own weight; and, moreover, if the matter was to be dealt with at all, it ought to be done by a Government Bill. In supplement of what had been said by preceding speakers, he mentioned that he was himself acquainted with many instances in which the existing regulations were constantly violated, to the immense loss of the upper proprietors, who were entitled to protection. On those grounds he was glad to think that the rumour was true that the Secretary for Scotland was about to introduce a Bill; and he was sure all their Lordships desired that it should be fair in the interests of all parties.

THE EARL OF GALLOWAY said, he had insuperable objections to the Bill, although he considered that, in any legislation upon the question, consideration and sympathy should be shown to the upper proprietors, for the reason that the take of fish in the lower waters was entirely dependent upon the spawning grounds in the upper water. He could not, however, support the provisions of the Bill. As in the Bill before the other House, the Railway and Canal Traffic Bill, he objected to putting all such legislation in the hands of the President of the Board of Trade, so he opposed the present Bill as vesting too great powers in the Secretary for Scotland, whoever he might be.

THE EARL OF DALHOUSIE, with reference to the proposal to refer the question to a Select Committee for inquiry, said, he hardly thought, in the circumstances, it was at all necessary. They had a Fishery Board in Scotland which had been considering this matter for some years, and they had on more than one occasion made large and ample proposals for the amendment of the law to Her Majesty's Government. The Government had, upon those proposals, within the past week drafted a Bill which was now under consideration both by the Fishery Board and Her Majesty's Government. He thought, under those circumstances, the idea of appointing a Select Committee was one which his noble Friend (the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres) would hardly adhere to.

THE MARQUESS OF HUNTLY said, that he had stated that, in his opinion, this was a question for the Government; and, of course, after the statement of the noble Earl, he should withdraw his Bill.

Amendment, Original Motion, and Bill (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY (DURHAM) BILL.

(*The Lord Bishop of Durham.*)

(NO. 59.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE BISHOP OF DURHAM (Dr. LIGHTFOOT), in moving that the Bill be read a second time, said: My Lords, the Bill that I beg to propose for second reading is one of a very simple character, and it will not require many words from me. Its object is to close the public-houses in the county of Durham all day on Sunday to all, except our very old and very troublesome friend, the *bonâ fide* traveller. This measure has not been previously before your Lordships' House; but it comes recommended now by a preponderating majority of the other House—a majority of two to one—and I feel confident that it will receive the careful consideration of your Lordships. It involves no new principle, and it involves no new experiment. Sunday Closing Acts are familiar to the Legislatures of other countries, as well as of our Colonies; and we have had experience of them far nearer home. Scotland has, for many years, reaped the advantage of such a measure; and, still more recently, Acts have been passed affecting Ireland and Wales. When I said that I asked your Lordships to affirm no new principle, I especially had the last-mentioned locality, Wales, in view; for, whatever may be said of Scotland or Ireland, in all such matters Wales is as much a part of England as the county of Durham. Nor indeed is the number of persons affected by the Bill so very different. The population of Durham at the last Census amounted to two-thirds of the population of the whole Principality of Wales, and probably it is increasing at a greater ratio. Well, my Lords, I do not think there is any risk in asking you to extend this measure to the county of Durham. Wherever it has been tried hitherto the results have been good. I am quite aware that adverse critics have referred to certain statistics with a view of disparaging the measure; but the broad fact remains that no community which has once had the benefit of such a measure has felt disposed to hark back or undo what it has done. In Scotland, where the measure has had the longest and the fairest trial, the results have been most beneficent. If any Member of your Lordships' House has any hesitation on this point, I would venture to recommend the perusal of an account, with statistic tables, given last year by Mr. Linton, for many years head of the police of Edinburgh, and the Public Prosecutor. Again, to those who are sceptical about the effect of legislation in this direction, I would say look at Norway. A generation ago travellers reported of Norway as a people of inebriates; but you may now travel there for weeks together without seeing the slightest sign of intoxication. This result has been effected, I will not say entirely, but very largely, by legislation; and in this legislation is included not only a Sunday Closing measure, but a festival closing measure — a measure which forbids the sale of spirits on Sundays and festivals, and on the eves of those days. The result produced in Norway has been surprising. But your Lordships will require to be assured that this particular measure is approved in the localities and by the class whom it will chiefly affect, as it is not wise for the Legislature in such matters to be in advance of public opinion, and I trust I shall be able to give your Lordships the assurance which you will demand. This evening I have presented no fewer than 98 Petitions from divers bodies — some official, others representative of different religious communities, others advocates of the temperance movement in its different branches, others emanating from public meetings in the great towns and in the villages of the county. But these, after all, are only the efflorescence of the movement which was initiated three years ago. At that time the measure was first brought before the House of Commons, and it passed the second reading by an enormous majority; but somehow it got entangled in the quickset of obstruction and never emerged. Public meetings were then held in 133 towns or parishes throughout the county, and those meetings were reported to be practically unanimous on the subject. These towns and parishes comprised nearly the whole of the county which had not been canvassed in some other way. Then, again, a house canvass was undertaken in 25 different centres throughout the diocese, and of the voting papers returned 60,000 were in favour of Sunday closing, only 2,440 against it, and 2,144 neutral. Again, there were Petitions from every Board of Guardians throughout the county, and from every Corporation but one in its favour. There was also another test. When the Motion the other day was before the Commons, it was approved by not less than 15 of the 16 Representatives from the county. The remaining one, the hon. Member for the city of Durham (Mr. Milvain), has since found himself in conflict with some of his strongest and most influential supporters on this very ground. These are very striking facts, and, so far as my own observation goes, no one measure since I have been connected with the county of Durham has drawn to itself in the same degree persons of all opinions. It unites all religious Churches and sects—Churchmen, Roman Catholics, Nonconformists, Sabbatarians and non-Sabbatarians. It enlist both political Parties—Liberal and Conservative; it combines all promoters of the temperance movement, the advocates and opponents of Local Option alike, abstainers and non-abstainers equally. But there is one remarkable fact; it is essentially a working man's measure. The tide of opinion is strongest in its favour just in those neighbourhoods which are inhabited chiefly by the working and poorer classes. In the city of Durham, for instance, in the household canvass, the proportion in favour of the Bill throughout the city was, if I remember rightly, as seven to one; but in some of the worst parishes where the poorest people dwell it was in one as 14 to one, and in another as 16 to one. I have presented this evening a Petition from a pit district in my diocese, a parish with a population of about 5,600 persons. It is signed by 1,646 men and women above the age of 18. My informant adds that it was got up in four evenings, and that only 4 per cent of those asked to sign had refused. In fact, the canvass of which I have spoken was chiefly conducted by working men themselves in their leisure hours. Sometimes an appeal is made by opponents to our feelings of generosity. We are told that it is an ungracious thing for persons who have their well-stocked cellars or their clubs to put these restrictions on their poorer and less favoured neighbours. However creditable these sentiments are to the hearts of those who use them, they entirely lose sight of the practical issue—the working man's view of the question. The working man looks at the question from a wholly different point of view. The climate of Durham, his arduous employment, the atmosphere of the mine, the heat of the iron foundry, all predispose him to the use of stimulants. The Sunday comes; he has his time on his hands to go where he wishes; he has money in his pocket, for he has been paid his wages the evening before. The public-house door is open to him, and it is the only door open to him. Are we surprised if he yields to the temptation? The working man looks upon legislation such as this as a helping hand stretched out to him when he is struggling in the seat of temptation; and it would be a sorry comfort to him to be told that we are actuated by sentiments of generosity in not stretching out that helping hand, and leaving him to be plunged into the abyss below, This Bill, as affecting only a particular locality, is condemned by some as piecemeal legislation. Your Lordships have already embarked, as I have shown, upon piecemeal legislation, and the further we go in this direction the less piecemeal our work will be. I should very much sooner a Bill were introduced dealing with the whole of the United Kingdom; but we have been waiting year after year, until we have come to the conclusion that half a loaf is better than no bread. The vision of a hope of a whole loaf in the distant future, dangled before the eyes, is poor comfort for a hungry stomach. The value of the opinion of the Durham miners on any great Imperial question of wide and far-reaching issues may be differently estimated; but surely they are the best judges of what concerns the health and comfort of their own homes. No doubt, there is the question of the frontier, which presents great difficulties, and these we cannot altogether remove. But I feel sure that if you pass this Bill, the counties of Northumberland and Yorkshire will follow quickly in the wake of Durham. Movements have already begun in those counties in this same direction and your Lordships would stimulate them by passing this Bill. Then it is said that the intention of such a measure would be evaded through the clause which excepts the *bonâ-fide* traveller, and that it would encourage private drinking. I do not contend that this Bill or any other Bill would reclaim the inebriate. What I do claim for it is that it will keep the waverers straight, and will remove the initial temptation from many besides. It requires a deliberate act to store up drink on Saturday night for consumption on Sunday. It demands a certain effort to walk three miles in order to gratify a propensity for drink. I thank your Lordships very sincerely for the kind and patient hearing you have given me. I advocate the measure in all confidence, because I feel sure that I have at my back the very strong and enthusiastic approval of the mass of the working men of Durham. I advocate it in all earnestness, because I believe that it will confer a substantial boon on large classes whom, during a residence of seven years in Durham, I have learned to appreciate increasingly for their very sterling qualities. I cannot expect that your Lordships will feel the same interest in the matter that I do; but I entreat you to hold out a helping hand to members of the community to whom you yourselves, directly or indirectly, are largely indebted for the comforts and necessaries of life—the miners and ironworkers, the artizans, and the shipwrights of Durham. I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^{a}."—(*The Lord Bishop of Durham.*)

LORD BRAMWELL, on rising to move that the Bill be read a second time that day six months, said: In asking your Lordships to read this Bill a second time this day six months, I do so reluctantly from my respect for the right rev. Prelate who brings it forward. But this Bill seems so wrong, so objectionable, and such an unwarrantable interference with the rights of persons, and so unlikely to bring about that for which it is intended—that is, more sobriety—that I feel bound to object to it. I am not insensible to the mischiefs of drink. I have had the opportunity of seeing some of the mischief which it brings about in my official capacity, and I have not lived to my present age without knowing privately the mischief that it has done. Whether £135,000,000 is the sum spent annually on drink in this country or not, I do not know; but even if a very large deduction has to be made from that amount, yet a very great deal too much drink is consumed, to the injury of health, thrift, and economy. I quite agree that the money spent on drink is far too much to be laid out upon it by the people who spend it; and I do not believe that they get in this way the greatest amount of enjoyment for their money. I do not seek in the least to disguise all this; but I must say that there is a very great deal of exaggeration. I will give your Lordships an illustration. We hear constantly of the number of people driven mad by drink; but it has been proved that in a very great many of these cases neither effect is the cause of the other, but that the same mental constitution alone is the cause of both drunkenness and madness. Therefore, it is an entire mistake to attribute insanity to excessive drinking in all the cases where they co-exist. I attribute this exaggeration to over-zeal on the part of people who are trying to make the world better than it is. A great many people believe that drink is of great utility if used in moderation; and Sir James Paget has given it as his opinion that, for intellectual work, alcoholic stimulants are required. I would ask your Lordships whether those who support this kind of legislation are doing an altogether reasonable thing in asserting the evil of drinking without any consideration, on the other hand, of the enjoyment it gives? If not an invidious question, I should like to know how many of your Lordships entirely abstain from alcoholic beverages? We do not treat drink fairly. This Bill is to prevent the sale of "intoxicating" drinks in the county of Durham on Sundays. Wine, spirits, and beer are indeed intoxicating liquors if taken in sufficient quantities; but why is one particular property to be singled out? Why is no mention made of their pleasant and agreeable qualities? Would your Lordships speak of water as a drowning liquor? Yet it most certainly is. Intoxicating liquors give a great deal of enjoyment when taken in moderation and with reason, and it is a most unreasonable thing to treat it as an article so pernicious that it should be altogether done away with. There ought to be some little discernment in the matter, particularly when we consider that the objectionable quality of the article consists only in its being taken in excess. I ask your Lordships, therefore, to treat drink, and wine and spirits, fairly, and not to look at them unfairly. They are capable of considerable enjoyment by those who indulge in them reasonably and rationally. The right rev. Prelate has said that Durham is very much in favour of the Bill; but the matter to which I shall now have to call your Lordships' attention almost makes me think that there must be two Durhams. The right rev. Prelate has presented a variety of Petitions, and I have one which has been signed by over 60,000 people living in the county of Durham, and there are two or three other Petitions also from other bodies. Those Petitions were not sent to me in time to present to your Lordships earlier in the Sitting; but I will now present them. [The Petitions were brought in.] Those are the Petitions. Your Lordships will scarely think, therefore, that the recital in the Preamble of this Bill is correct when it speaks of the people of Durham. Seventy thousand persons in the county of Durham, at all events, do not desire the extension of a measure of this kind to the county. One of the Petitions presented in favour of the Bill states that there is a strong necessity for the measure in the county of Durham, as drunkenness exists there among the rural population to a very large extent. If that is so, it is a very remarkable thing that such an enormous number of persons should have signed the Petitions presented by the right rev. Prelate. Then it is said that the Petitions are also signed by many publicans who desire to have Sunday as a day of rest. What is to prevent their shutting up their shops every Sunday if they wish to do so? They might do it, and would, if the people were as much in earnest as they professed to be, because there would be no customers on Sunday. I have always the greatest possible distrust about these Petitions. It is so much easier to say "Yes," than "No;" and by signing a Petition the signer hopes that the whole thing is done with, and that he will hear no more about the matter. Your Lordships know, however divided opinion may be, what influence a few persons with strong opinions have in turning the scale one way or the other. I admit in this matter that possibly there may be a majority of people in Durham in favour of the Bill, and I agree that where there must be action the majority should bind the minority; but in this matter I must protest against the majority binding the minority. I protest against the right of 99 men out of 100 to insist upon the 100th man not drinking if he wishes, or prescribing what colour or cut of coat he should wear. Where there is a necessity for action then the majority must prevail; where there is no necessity it is simply tyranny on the part of the majority to enforce their views upon the minority. Now, I ask your Lordships what this Bill is to do when it passes. Is it for the sake of those who drink too much, or for the sake of pleasing a very amiable class of persons, very earnest and very zealous, who would make the world better than it is at present? I must ask your Lordships to allow me to use an argument that I used when a similar Bill was before this House, only Cornwall was then the place to be experimented upon. Your Lordships' rejected that Bill. I ask, what would your Lordships' think if a man were to come on a Saturday night and demand the key of your cellar, promising it should be returned to you on Monday morning; and when you said—"Have you any reason to fear I shall take too much?" he replied—"Oh, no; but there is a man half-a-dozen doors below who does?" What difference is there between that case and the present one? I do urge upon your Lordships that it is an unreasonable and unwarrantable thing to deprive persons of fermented liquors who take them in moderation because there are other persons who take them in excess. But I have said, and I repeat, that I believe this is a measure which, if passed, will not promote sobriety. I have several times said in this House that it is in vain to pass a law with which the public conscience does not go. I mean by that that it is not well to pass a law that right-minded and well-conducted men do not find so far in conformity with their conscience that they are willing to obey. If you do so, that law will be broken and evaded. There are two ways in which this law can be evaded. Provision will be made overnight, the drink will be consumed in private—no one seeing his discreditable condition if the man gets drunk—and not in the house of the publican, who is responsible for those he supplies. But, besides that, there is that troublesome person the *bonâ-fide* traveller, and travel he will in search of drink. I will give your Lordships a case. Wales has the fortune—I do not think good fortune, and as I show presently—to have a Sunday Closing Act. From the town of Swansea to the Mumbles there is a tramway, and this tramway is provided with *bonâ-fide* travellers on a Sunday, because it is beyond three miles from Swansea, and extra trams are also put on. They go there for drinking purposes only, and some of them become so drunk that they cannot find their way back to Swansea. Now that is one instance of the *bonâ fide* traveller. Another, and in my opinion a shocking case, is this. Clubs are instituted, a room is set apart, but it is perfectly well understood that no member of the club is to go there except on a Sunday. On that day the members of the club assemble to drink at the house, and you cannot interfere with their doing it. I have here a paper in which it is stated that there are upwards of 60 of these clubs in Cardiff, which are contrivances for evading the law. That is another way in which it is done. You have, therefore, the *bonâ-fide* traveller and these bogus clubs. It is certain that as long as a man has got the money to command something that he wants, and there is another person who is desirous of supplying him, you may make what laws you like, but in some way or other they will be evaded and avoided. And that is why I believe that this is not a measure which is calculated to promote sobriety. The right rev. Prelate has said that this is indeed piecemeal legislation, but that there is precedent for it. But there is no reason why, because you have done one thing out of rule, or one thing that is quite abnormal, that you should do another. Why not bring the question forward at once? What objection can there be to its being enforced all over England if it is right in Durham? None. There is this to be said about Durham. Your Lordships probably know Newcastle. It has, I think, about 140,000 inhabitants in the county of Northumberland. Gateshead, which is the other side of the river, has about 50,000 inhabitants. Well, what will be the consequences of this Bill? If it cannot be evaded in any other way, as far as the Gateshead people are concerned, they will just cross the Tyne and drink their fill in the county of Northumberland. This Bill will, therefore, turn out to be a Bill for the encouragement of Newcastle publicans. The people of Darlington will likewise make an incursion into Yorkshire. They may be the most *mala-fide* travellers that ever travelled, but they have only to cross into the neighbouring county to get drink. Another remark I wish to make is this. Why shut up houses on Sunday? Why, if it is not wrong to drink a glass of beer on Saturday should it be wrong to do so on Sunday? Now, in my opinion, Sunday is the last day on which you ought to close a public-house, because on Sunday people recreate themselves with a walk into the country, and why should they be debarred from taking a glass of beer if they wish to do so? But the public-house is to be shut up altogether, and a man cannot get a cup of tea or a glass of soda water. You will have that in Durham which exists now to a certain extent in other counties; you will have the publican selling beer on the sly, and there will be the usual perjury cases, several of which I have had before me. It is certain that the law imposing closing hours has given rise to a great deal of perjury. The right rev. Prelate said that wherever the experiment had been tried there was no desire to hark back. I know nothing of Norway, but I believe it is absolutely certain that the Sunday Closing Act in Wales has been a failure. Now, another thing I wish to say is this. When the Cornwall Sunday Closing Bill was under discussion before your Lordships, Lord Aberdare stated that all the Bill proposed to do was to put the publican upon the level of other traders, who were prohibited from carrying on their trade on Sunday. With great submission, that is not so. In the first place, the Act against Sunday trading is really obsolete. It is obsolete for this reason, that the construction put upon it by the Courts was, that the offence could only be committed once in the day; and if there were 20 different acts of trading on the Sunday, still it was only one Sunday trading, and the penalty was scarcely more than nominal. It is a totally different penalty to that which attaches to a publican. The latter is subject to a penalty of £10, and, moreover, he is subject to the forfeiture of his licence. These are the considerations on which I ask your Lordships not to pass this Bill. I have shown that it is, in the first place, an unwarrantable interference with the liberty of individuals to say that they shall not enjoy themselves with a rational quantity of drink, which is a source of great pleasure and enjoyment. I say also that it will not produce sobriety, and will be attended with mischief that I have endeavoured to point out—that is to say, there will be evasions and breaches of the law which it is very undesirable should take place.

Amendment *moved,* to leave out ("now,") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months.")—(*The Lord Bramwell.*)

LORD NORTON said, that he should vote against the second reading of the Bill, because he believed closing public-houses, instead of converting them, was wrong in principle, and would not meet the object which the promoters had in view. It was an attempt to put down abuse by legislating against use. Public-houses had their legitimate and necessary uses for refreshment and rest, and it was wrong to say that those persons who wished to use them properly should be debarred from doing so because other persons abused them. To treat public-houses as necessarily places of drunkenness was the way to make them so. Whenever such legislation had been attempted it always excepted the *bond-fide* traveller from its operation; there was, therefore, only evasion under that character needed to keep up as much drunkenness as ever. The right legislation would be against drunkenness; and to make its permission on any premises forfeit the abused license to sell drink.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL) said, that, having represented the city of Durham in the other House, he thought that he ought to tell their Lordships what he had been able to ascertain about the sentiments and views of the county of Durham with regard to this question. He had had considerable means of informing himself upon the subject, even more than his noble and learned Friend who had moved the rejection of this Bill (Lord Bramwell). He did not intend to deal exhaustively at that hour with the whole of this subject, because the arguments which had been addressed to their Lordships against the Bill were very much those which had been used with regard to previous Bills; and, if he might say so without disrespect to the noble and learned Lord, were the stock arguments of that Society which was good enough to instruct them from time to time as to how they were to vote, and of which the noble and learned Lord was a distinguished member. He would confine himself to the necessities of the case, and especially to what concerned this particular Bill. He quite admitted that for a long time after he had gone to the city of Durham he had been indisposed to vote for any such legislation as this, as he had always felt that it was not a matter which affected himself or those who were able to live in the same way and provide themselves with refreshments, and that it would be a monstrous thing from one's own views of comfort or morality to vote against the wishes of the class of the community that practically was affected and inconvenienced. But he could say, without hesitation, that these were the very people who were most eager for this Bill, and he could assure the noble and learned Lord that if he had mixed with the working men and talked with them as he had himself he would not have used some of the arguments which he had used to-night. It was true that there was in the county of Durham a great amount of drunkenness; but this was regretted not merely by the Temperance Societies, but by the people themselves, and those who had most impressed on him the expediency of this Bill had been men not particularly of the religious class or the tremely respectable class, but men of the working class who felt the strength of the temptation and the difficulty of resisting it, and who knew that when public-house after public-house was open in the street on Sunday they went in and drank in a way in which they never would have done if they had had to provide themselves with drink on Saturday night. The noble and learned Lord had spoken of Swansea and the Mumbles. No doubt, a certain number of people travelled by the tramway from Swansea to the Mumbles on the Sunday; but how many more would have been drinking in the public-houses of Swansea if they had been open? He had seen tramcars running to the Mumbles on Sunday afternoon, and could vouch that there was nothing like the male population of Swansea at the Mumbles, although some of the cars were well-filled; but it did not follow because certain persons went to the Mumbles for the purpose of drink that there should not be Sunday closing. He thought that the noble and learned Lord's argument went too far. It was really an argument against having any restriction at all in the hours during which drink was to be sold. It was practically saying that any man had a right not to have his liberty interfered with in the matter of getting drink when he wished. He was afraid, however, that all political Parties in this country were committed to the view that it was the legitimate function of Parliament to limit the hours in which intoxicating liquors might be sold. It was impossible nowadays to argue that it was not so. It was thought to be in the general interests that certain restrictions should be put upon the sale of liquor. There was no new principle in a Bill of this kind; it merely extended the principle which did exist before to certain other hours, and this principle which was here extended was one which had long been recognized. An important question was what public opinion was on this subject in the county of Durham and how it was to be ascertained. The first, and a most reasonable mode, was to ascertain the views of those elected to represent the constituency. But it might be said that Parties were so evenly balanced that some crotchet would turn the scale. Nothing of the sort was the case in the county of Durham, and mere crotcheteers had no chance of turning the scale. He maintained that it would be rather dangerous for that House to disregard the views of the elected Members of a constituency as expressed in the House of Commons and to say that they would go behind those views because they knew better. As against those views, what did the noble and learned Lord say? He said that he had presented to-night a very extensive Petition. For his own part, he thought that it was perhaps fortunate that the Petition had arrived so late, and that there had not been any possibility of investigation earlier, because a great many Petitions which were presented as having a large number of signatures turned out upon investigation to be far less numerously signed. He must respectfully submit to their Lordships that no Petition should be considered as of importance against the evidence afforded by the views of every Member for the constituency except one, and, with one exception, of every Corporation. Then his noble and learned Friend said that this was piecemeal legislation. He confessed that, for his own part, he had not the same objection to piecemeal legislation as that held by his noble and learned Friend. He thought that there might be great advantage in such legislation, because it enabled them to try experiments which if unsuccessful did no mischief. They could not go far beyond public opinion in this matter; but in Durham public opinion went as far as this Bill, although that was not the case in every part of England. It was not, therefore, expedient to pass such a Bill for the whole of England; but he hoped that the House would agree to the second reading of the Bill which was now before them.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I have listened with some interest to the noble and learned Lord laying down a doctrine which has found considerable favour "elsewhere," that the opinions of the Members for a particular district are to be taken as the opinions of the people therein. I am surprised that the noble and learned Lord, connected as he has been with the county of Durham, should not have detected the principal flaw in the argument which he used. The county of Durham, outside the city of Durham, has, undoubtedly, through its Representatives, pronounced in favour of this Bill; but the city of Durham, through its Representative, has pronounced equally emphatically against the Bill. Why is the city of Durham to be compulsorily sober because there are no cakes and ale in the county of Durham? The city of Durham has just as much right to be excepted from the county of Durham for this purpose as Ulster has the right to be excepted from the rest of Ireland for another. That is a small matter; and what I desire to explain is why, if the noble and learned Lord goes to a division, I shall follow him into the Lobby. My Lords, it is interesting, no doubt, to watch the growth of this particular feeling, which has acted so much upon the recent legislation of the country, and it is impossible to ignore its existence; but I must say that it does not inspire me with so much admiration as it inspires many other people. I do not know why a number of people who never go into a public-house should close them to the people who do. There is a Nemesis in store for those who are so ready to use the terrors of the law in order to make their fellow-subjects more virtuous. The effect of this legislation has been to multiply to an enormous extent clubs in various parts of the country, and these clubs are becoming more and more a nuisance, more and more demoralizing and injurious; and the complaints which come from the police, and from ministers of religion, are very imperious in their tone. I fully look forward to the necessity for Parliament dealing with the workmen's clubs; and when they deal with the workmen's clubs will they not have to deal with the rich man's clubs also? I shall look with considerable interest to see if there is the same unanimity of opinion as to closing the rich man's clubs on the Sunday. I cannot take my stand on the high platform of theory which is maintained with so much ability by the noble and learned Lord; but if I were to theorize on the matter I should agree with the noble and learned Lord in arguing what is consistent or inconsistent with sound principle. But I have found that sound principle never has the slightest effect with either House of the Legislature. When questions of this kind come before them, all that is considered is what is the force of public opinion which will have to be followed and observed; and, undoubtedly, public opinion on this subject is so powerful that there is not sufficient force in either House to resist it very long. My own opinion is that, to save a part, we must give up all hope of saving the whole, for the hope of saving the whole has gone long ago. Scotland, Ireland, and Wales have already been subjected to this exceptional legislation; and I believe if we are to prevent a general Sunday Closing Bill for the whole country from being passed—a result which I should regard with anything but satisfaction—our best hope of doing so must be to provide some arrangement by which, where there is an overwhelming majority of opinion in a particular district, they may try this scheme and see how it will succeed. Perhaps noble Lords will say then, Why do you not vote for this Bill? My answer is that this Bill does not allow for a trial of the experiment, it allows no *locus pœnitentiæ*, and that when it has been found that this repression leads to numberless journies to secret clubs, they will not be able to go back to the state of things which now exists. I have before ventured to express an opinion that the proper way of dealing with this question is to hand it over to the Local Authorities, and to allow them to decide for their particular locality whether this measure shall be carried out or not, and to give them the power of going back when they find the experiment does not answer. I believe that that is especially necessary, because I have no faith in the permanence of this most unfortunate and unreasonable movement. I believe it is merely a temporary craze, which will pass away, as similar crazes have passed before. It was in the nature of man to try to use the authority of Parliament to force others to become moral or theological according to their own standard. Two or three centuries ago such a measure as this would have taken the form of forcing people to go to church, or to assent to some particular article of religion, and the right rev. Prelate would have used such means of compulsion as were in his power to give it Parliamentary force. But now he wants to force them to adopt that particular mode of ethics which he himself believes in, in order to force them to abstain from drunkenness or intoxicating liquors. Such persons as the right rev. Prelate will always exist among the earnest teachers of religion, and his is a weakness to which the teachers of religion have always been exposed; but that is not a view which they will be able, for any length of time, to impress upon their lay brethren. Though for a time, in view of some great scandal, they might carry the community with them, the public, in the long run, would cease to follow them. I look for a revulsion of feeling on this question, and I believe that, in the long run, we shall leave men to determine what they shall eat and what they shall drink, and that this paroxysm of paternal legislation will pass by. While, therefore, I recognize the necessity for giving effect to a certain section of dominant public opinion on this matter, I am anxious that the way shall be left open for retreat. I believe that this subject can best be dealt with in a general Local Government Bill, in which the Local Authority shall have power to do what it thinks fit; and it is because I believe that to be the only sound solution of the question that I shall follow the noble and learned Lord who has moved the rejection of this Bill.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (The Earl of KIMBERLEY) said, he was not going to trouble the House at any length; but he wished to make one observation on the particular part of the noble Marquess's remarks as to leaving it to the Local Authorities to make regulations. That was what they wished to enact under the Local Government Bill; but their great Local Government Bills never passed. Now, the present outlook in political affairs was not particularly calm, and it was somewhat hard that these particular localities like Durham should have to wait until this great principle was adopted before they could give effect to their desires. He would suggest, as a perfectly easy way to meet the difficulty of the noble Marquess, that they should pass the second reading, and limit the operation of the Bill to three years.

On Question, That ("now") stand part of the Motion? Their Lordships *divided*:—Contents 47; Not-Contents 41: Majority 6.

CONTENTS.

Canterbury, L. Archp.
Herschell, L. (*L. Chancellor.*)
Spencer, E. (*L. President.*)

Westminster, D.

Northampton, M.
Ripon, M.

Camperdown, E. [*Teller.*]
Feversham, E.
Kimberley, E.
Morley, E.
Onslow, E.
Saint Germans, E.
Selborne, E.
Tankerville, E.

Halifax, V.

Bangor, L. Bp.
Chichester, L. Bp.
Durham, L. Bp.
Hereford, L. Bp.
London, L. Bp.
Oxford, L. Bp.
St. Albans, L. Bp.
St. Asaph, L. Bp.

Truro, L. Bp.

Aberdare, L. [*Teller.*]
Brodrick, L. (*V. Midleton.*)
Clifford of Chudleigh, L.
Cloncurry, L.
Coleridge, L.
Cottesloe, L.
Crofton, L.
Elgin, L. (*E. Elgin and Kincardine.*)
Herries, L.
Houghton, L.
Howth, L. (*E. Howth.*)
Kensington, L.
Kinnaird, L.
Lingen, L.
Monson, L.
Northbourne, L.
Ramsay, L. (*E Dalhousie.*)
Rosebery, L. (*E. Rosebery.*)
Sandhurst, L.
Sudeley, L.
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Winmarleigh, L.
Wolverton, L.

NOT-CONTENTS.

Buckingham and Chandos, D.
Grafton, D.
Richmond, D.

Bristol, M.
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Ashburnham, E.
Fortescue, E.
Iddesleigh, E.
Innes, E. (*D. Roxburghe.*)
Lovelace, E.
Manvers, E.
Mar, E.
Milltown, E.
Northesk, E.
Ravensworth, E.

Hawarden, V.
Powerscourt, V.
Sidmouth, V.

Bramwell, L. [*Teller.*]
Colchester, L.
Dinevor, L.
Egerton, L.
Ellenborough, L.
Elphinstone, L.
FitzGerald, L.
Foxford, L. (*E. Limerick.*)
Halsbury, L.
Harris, L.
Kintore, L. (*E. Kintore.*)
Leigh, L. [*Teller.*]
Lovat, L.

Lyveden, L.
Norton, L.
Poltimore, L.
Sinclair, L.
Somerton, L. (*E. Normanton.*)
Teynham, L.
Tredegar, L.
Wemyss, L. (*E. Wemyss.*)
Wigan, L. (*E. Crawford and Balcarres.*)
Windsor, L.

Resolved in the *affirmative.*

Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Thursday* next.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION (BIRMINGHAM) BILL [H.L.] (NO. 96).

A Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Education Department under the Elementary Education Act, 1870, to enable the School Board for Birmingham to put in force the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, 1845, and the Acts amending the same; And

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION (LONDON) BILL [H.L.] (NO. 97).

A Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by the Education Department under the Elementary Education Act, 1870, to enable the School Board for London to put in force the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, 1845, and the Acts amending the same;
Were *presented* by The Lord President; read 1ª; and *referred* to the Examiners.

House adjourned at a quarter before Eight o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 11th May, 1886.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*Ordered* — *First Reading* — Losses by Riot (Compensation) [209]; Charities, &c. (Exemption from Local Rates) * [210]; Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers) Act (1875) Amendment* [211].

Second Reading — Land Transfer (Scotland) [144], *negatived.*

Third Reading — National Debt* [191], and *passed.*

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS—*Second Reading*—Commons Regulation (Hayling) [165], *put off;* Gas (No. 1) * [196]; Pier and Harbour.*

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

FELIXSTOWE, IPSWICH, AND MIDLANDS RAILWAY, PETITION FOR BILL.—RESOLUTION.

MR. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge), in moving—

> "That the Resolution of the Standing Orders Committee of the 19th day of February last, with respect to the Felixstowe, Ipswich, and Midlands Railway Petition, together with the said Petition, and the Bill annexed thereto, be referred back to the said Committee, and that they have power to inquire whether there are any special circumstances which render it just and expedient that the Standing Orders should be dispensed with in respect of the said Petition,"

said: I rise for the purpose of asking the House to pass this Resolution as a favour, and not as a matter of justice. It has reference to a Bill called the Felixstowe and Midlands Railway Extension Bill. Felixstowe forms part of the constituency which I have the honour to represent. It is a watering place; and, although not very large, is one of the most pleasant watering places on the Suffolk Coast. It is situated at the mouth of the River Orwell, opposite to Harwich, and only separated from Harwich by the mouth of that river, which, I may say in passing, is the most picturesque waterway on the East Coast of England. Distant about 12 miles at the head of this river stands the enterprizing town of Ipswich. At Felixstowe there has just been constructed a dock capable of accommodating vessels of the largest draught of water at any state of the tide, and the dock is connected with a railway which now terminates at the town of Ipswich, or rather in the parish of Westerfield, just adjoining the town of Ipswich. There are about 13 miles of railway now connected with the Felixstowe Dock; and in the scheme I have now to ask the House to sanction the proposal is to connect with it some 50 miles more of railway, in order to bring Felixstowe Dock and Railway into connection with the town of Cambridge, and there to unite it with the Midland, London and North-Western, and Great Eastern Railway systems. I need hardly say that the scheme would be of great benefit to the district through which it is proposed that the railway should pass. It would pass through a part of Suffolk which is singularly destitute of railway accommodation, and which greatly needs it; and the dock at Felixstowe would be opened out for the development of Continental traffic between the Midland Counties and the North of England and the sea. It would thus be of advantage to a large number of people, and when completed the country would be richer by one more railway, giving facilities for travel and for conducting of all kinds of business. The plans relating to this line were at an early period of the Session duly deposited and went before the Standing Orders Committee, but were thrown out by them. Now, I have no fault whatever to find with the Standing Orders Committee for throwing out the plans. There were inaccuracies of detail in the plans deposited by the engineers—inaccuracies in no way germane to the feasibility of carrying out the plan, but still inaccuracies quite sufficient to justify the Standing Orders Committee in the course they took, in throwing out the Bill on the ground of its failing to comply with the Standing Orders of the House. The Petition I now present to the House asks the House to allow the Bill to be sent back again to the Standing Orders Committee, and I will explain in a few words the grounds upon which I venture to ask for this indulgence. I do not ask it in the least degree on behalf of the promoters of the Bill. I feel that the promoters suffered from their own fault, and that they have only their own engineer and themselves to blame for the position in which the Bill was placed before the Standing Orders Committee. But it appears to me that there are special circumstances at the present time which make it desirable that, if possible, the great works connected with this proposed railway should be carried out. There is a singular dearth of works of this kind before the country at the present moment, and there is a large amount of labour anxiously, and, I am sorry to say, in vain, seeking for employment. The works connected with the construction of this railway are estimated to require an expenditure of something like £1,000,000, and that money, I am positively assured, is ready to be advanced at once, so soon as the necessary formalities authorizing the construction of the railway shall have been gone through. Therefore, if the House will give its permission to the request I make there will be employment provided for a large amount of labour. What I ask the House is that it will, by allowing the Bill—the plans in connection with which are now, it is believed, perfectly correct—to go back to the Standing Orders Committee, thus opening the way for employment to a very large number of persons. It is quite within the power of the House to do this, although I am aware that it is a very unusual course for the House to take. It is not, however, a course without precedent. I hold in my hand particulars of a precedent which occurred in 1875 in reference to the Edinburgh Street Tramways Bill, when the House granted a similar indulgence to the promoters of that measure. Now, it seems to me that in the present state of the labour market, and of trade generally, it would be a very great pity indeed if the House should refuse this indulgence. I am informed that all the money is ready to be spent, and that it is kept from the men who are desirous of getting employment only in consequence of the position in which, through certain technical but really unimportant inaccuracies in its accompanying plans, the Bill has been placed. If ever there was an occasion when it was fitting that the House should do what, I admit, is an unusual act, this is one of those occasions, and I earnestly hope that the House in its kindness will allow the Bill to go back to the Standing Orders Committee. I would not ask this indulgence if I had not first availed myself of the opportunity of mentioning the matter to the right hon. Baronet the Member for the University of Oxford (Sir John R. Mowbray), who is Chairman of the Standing Orders Committee, and who so ably presides over the proceedings of that Committee. I think I am not misrepresenting the right hon. Baronet when I say that if it is the wish of the House that the Bill should go back, looking at the special circumstances of the case, he will not be prepared to oppose it. I have been waited on by two or three deputations of working men, and by a gentleman representing the Mansion House Relief Committee, and by another gentleman from a Trades Organization in London, representing something like 27,000 men. Both of these Bodies and these deputations have earnestly requested me to take up this matter and to lay it before the House. I therefore ask the House, in these unusual circumstances, considering the great depression of trade, to grant the favour which I have now the honour to solicit at its hands. The money is ready, and, if the Bill is allowed to pass, by September next the works will actually be commenced, and some hundreds of working men will be very grateful to the House for the facilities given to them to obtain employment. I beg to move the Motion which stands in my name.

Mr. QUILTER (Suffolk, South): I rise for the purpose of most heartily seconding the Motion which has been made by the hon. Member for the Woodbridge Division. The line traverses a district which I have the honour to represent, and if it is made it will be a source of great convenience to the agricultural and manufacturing classes in that division. There are many farmers there now who have to send their produce 13 or 14 miles to a railway station who will be very much benefited by the construction of this line. I should not myself have ventured to make the appeal which my hon. Friend has so eloquently made, although I feel as much, or even more, interested in the success of the Bill than he is; for I feel that the patience of the Standing Orders Committee has been sorely tried by this Bill having failed to comply with those proper conditions which are laid down by the House in reference to Private Bill legislation. But the circumstances with regard to the industrial population in my division are so very peculiar, and so very pressing, owing to the low rate of wages the agricultural labourers are receiving at the present moment—in some instances as low as 9*s.* a-week—in addition to which it is the fact that a great many of them are unable to obtain work, while not only they, but many mat weavers, have been on short time during the whole of the winter, and that this railway, if proceeded with, will afford employment for hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of deserving men, and will give a stimulus to trades which are at present but languidly carried on in the division. These are the reasons which induce me to join in the appeal which my hon. Friend has made. I have no hesitation in saying that if the House is disposed to grant this boon it will prove to be a very great benefit and a very great blessing to hundreds and thousands of deserving labouring men who have recently had the privilege of the franchise given to them by this House. I believe that, in every way, they are worthy of that privilege, and also of any measure for their assistance which may be brought forward. There is one special circumstance connected with this case to which I think I am entitled to allude. There are, I am informed, 1,500 men who will shortly be thrown out of employment by the suspension of the operations at the Felixstowe Dock, with which the proposed railway will be connected in some measure; and owing to the cessation of the large relief works, which were started some time ago at Ipswich, for the simple purpose of giving employment to those in want of work, there will be a large number of men thrown idle upon the locality. The construction of this railway will find them the means of subsistence, and, therefore, I beg most heartily to second the appeal which has been made by my hon. Friend.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Resolution of the Standing Orders Committee of the 19th day of February last, with respect to the Felixstowe, Ipswich, and Midlands Railway Petition, together with the said Petition, and the Bill annexed thereto, be referred back to the said Committee, and that they have power to inquire whether there are any special circumstances which render it just and expedient that the Standing Orders should be dispensed with in respect to the said Petition."—(*Mr. Everett.*)

Colonel MAKINS (Essex, S.E.): It may appear a somewhat ungracious position to occupy when I rise to oppose the Petition which the two hon. Members opposite have made to the House, and which they have said they make, not as a matter of justice, but as a matter of grace. I should like, however, to draw the recollection of the House to the history of the Bill. I do not dispute a single word that has been stated by the hon. Member who introduced this Motion in regard to the necessity of this railway, or in regard to any of the facts he has brought forward in reference to it. But that is not the question for this House at the present stage. It is rather a question to be considered when the Bill comes before a Committee of this House, and it has to be proved in proper form before that Committee. What is the history of this Bill? In 1885 the same Railway Bill was brought before the House of Commons, and it was then thrown out by the Standing Orders Committee because it was so full of blunders that it could not possibly be passed. The Standing Orders were suspended in order that the promoters might have another chance; but the result was that the Bill was not proceeded with. Surely if the promoters of this Bill were so anxious about their scheme after it had once failed to pass the Standing Orders Committee, and they got leave to bring it in again in an amended form, they would have availed themselves of the opportunity? I suppose, presumedly, it was for want of funds. The hon. Member now informs the House that there is £1,000,000 at the disposal of the promoters; but he did not tell us who has it ready, or where it is. If anybody is prepared to advance £1,000,000 for a purpose of this sort, he will probably look to get it back from the subscribers who will support the undertaking hereafter. As I have said, the Bill was not proceeded with in 1885, and now, in 1886, the same Bill has been brought forward again. It has failed before the Standing Orders Committee on precisely the same points upon which it failed in 1885. The promoters of the Bill, who are so anxious to get this railway constructed, did not take the trouble to remedy the blunders they committed in 1885. Every single error was repeated, and the Bill was thrown out by the Standing Orders Committee on precisely the same grounds. The hon. Member now comes forward and asks us to reinstate the Bill. I listened with great attention to his remarks to see if I could find any special grounds to justify the course we are asked to take. The only ground I could find was, I admit, a strong one; but it is simply a sentimental ground—namely, that in order to provide work for the unemployed, this £1,000,000 will be set loose if the Bill be allowed to go before a Standing Orders Committee. Now, I wish to point out to the hon. Member that the people he wishes to benefit would not be benefited even if this railway is started, because railways are not constructed by agricultural labourers, but by navvies who are brought from various parts of the country, and whose regular business it is to go from place to place constructing railways. The only people who would be benefited by the construction of this railway besides these navvies would be those whose food they would eat and whose beer they would drink. There is another objection, but it is one which will be better dealt with by the authorities of the House than by myself—namely, that if this Petition is granted now, and the Bill is sent upstairs, it will be almost impossible for it to reach the House of Lords before the day after which no Bill can be read a second time in that House. Therefore, those who oppose the Bill—and I need not remind hon. Members that there are generally two sides to every question—the opponents, as well as the promoters of the Bill, will be put to the expense of contesting the matter again before the Standing Orders Committee, and they will suffer, as they have already suffered, in their purse through having to oppose a measure which I venture to think cannot be very seriously intended. I think that this Bill is one of those financial undertakings which have been introduced into Parliament in recent years, but which have always been regarded as objectionable. It is quite possible that if the Bill is passed, and the capital is raised, and the railway commenced, that we shall have a repetition of what occurred in the case of the Hull and Barnsley Railway last year, and that preference debentures will have to be created in order to enable the promoters to carry out the undertaking. If on a question like this the Standing Orders of this House are to be ignored, I think we may as well do away with our Standing Orders altogether. They exist for certain purposes, for the protection of opponents as well as promoters; and when a Company has shown so little attention, and has on more than one occasion refrained from complying with the Standing Orders in the past, I do not think they come here with a very good grace to ask the House to suspend its Standing Orders in order that they may proceed with their Bill. I trust that the House will not give its consent to the Motion of the hon. Member.

Sir JOHN R. MOWBRAY (Oxford University): Perhaps it may save the time of the House if I interpose thus early in the debate, and state shortly, as Chairman of the Standing Orders Committee, the views which we take. The hon. Members who have moved and seconded the Resolution have stated explicitly that they do not appear on behalf of the promoters of the Bill. Had anyone appeared here on behalf of the promoters I must have called attention myself very strongly to the circumstances which have been brought before the House by my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Essex (Colonel Makins). It is quite true that the promoters came before Parliament last year with a Bill identical with the present, and we suspended the Standing Orders then in order to enable new plans to be deposited. Those plans were not deposited, and the Bill was withdrawn. The promoters came this year with the old Bill, and have deposited the old plans with the same identical errors which we pointed out last year, and the promoters certainly are not entitled to any favour or indulgence from anybody. As to the appeal which has been made to me as Chairman of the Standing Orders Committee, I have nothing to do with it in that capacity; but it is for the House to consider whether, owing to the great want of employment which exists, they will be induced to take a liberal view of the matter. I have received deputations from working men in London with regard to this Bill, and also representations from Lord Charles Bruce on the part of the Mansion House Fund, desiring that the work may be allowed to proceed in the interest of the unemployed, having regard to the depression of trade and the large number of the labouring classes who are now out of employment. That is a matter of policy for the House to consider. If the appeal were made on behalf of the promoters I would certainly ask the House not to grant any indulgence to them; but I understand that it is made in the interests of the unemployed, with a view of promoting the construction of new works. I understand that the money is ready, and that new plans are ready to be submitted. Therefore, if the House is inclined to grant the indulgence asked for, I shall have nothing to say in opposition to the Motion.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I would venture to join in the appeal which has been made to the House. I have received a large number of deputations myself from persons who believe, whether rightly or wrongly I am unable to say, they can get employment in connection with this railway if the Bill receives the sanction of the House. It is only on their behalf that this favour is asked at the hands of the House. I quite feel how excessively difficult it is, if we are to have Standing Orders at all, that we should sanction their violation. This, however, seems to be a very special case; and I think that the men who may be able to get employment if these works are commenced, ought not to suffer because of the negligence of the promoters of the Bill.

SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.): I think, before we allow a Bill like this to go back to the Standing Orders Committee, we ought to have a little more information with regard to the capital which is alleged to be ready to pay the expense of constructing this railway. As I understand the matter, the promoters of this Bill have already failed on two or three occasions to comply with the Standing Orders, in consequence of their inability to obtain the capital. It seems very strange that within two months of the time when, as I understand, railway enterprize has been in a position of more difficulty than it was ever in before, the promoters should suddenly be able to command £1,000,000 if they receive this favour from the House. Unless we have more information on the matter than the bare allegation that the money will be forthcoming, I think it is the duty of the House to vote against the Bill, because it will only lead to false hopes being raised which will never be realized.

SIR HENRY TYLER (Great Yarmouth): I may say at once, in rising to oppose the Motion, that I am a Director of the Great Eastern Railway. I think the House will be prepared to admit that the promoters have placed themselves entirely out of court. In this Session they have made no attempt to rectify the errors which they committed in a former Session; and I am informed that the errors contained in the Bill this year even go beyond those of the measure of last year. No doubt, an appeal to the House, with a view to find employment for a number of labouring men, is a different matter. I understand that the promoters of the Bill have been for some time acting as if they were without any money at their back. A very surprising statement is, however, now made to the House—namely, that there is £1,000,000 at somebody's bankers ready to be utilized in connection with this undertaking. But we have no evidence that if this railway is sanctioned the £1,000,000 will be forthcoming; and we all know that, in these days of depression, so large a sum of money is not very easily found. Therefore, until we have some evidence that this £1,000,000 is ready, I would ask the House not to believe that it is lying at a banker's ready to be expended in the making of this railway. If it were really there, I admit that it would be quite a different thing; but even if it were available, and the Bill should be passed by the Standing Orders Committee of the House of Lords, it is quite impossible that it could get through by the 30th of June next. Fresh surveys would have to be made; fresh contracts to be entered into; and it is quite certain that the railway could not be commenced in the course of the present year. Therefore, the construction of this line in that case, even if £1,000,000 is forthcoming, would not afford the means of relieving the present depression, or of providing work within any reasonable period for any now unemployed.

SIR ROBERT PEEL (Blackburn): I am anxious to say a word before the House divides. After the speech of the hon. Member who has just sat down I think the House ought to be very suspicious of the remarks made by Directors of Railways. Where it is evident that their own interests are concerned, they are not very likely to study the interests of the general public against their own. The hon. Member wants to know where the money is for the making of this railway. Now, it is well known that so much per cent has already been deposited for the construction of the line, and the line itself is to be made for the purpose of benefiting the property of a great landed proprietor, who is prepared, I understand, to advance the funds necessary for the construction of the railway. After the appeal which has been made by two hon. Members who represent that part of the county of Suffolk through which the railway will run, and looking at all the circumstances, and the speech we have just heard, I think the House may well reconsider the position in which it stands in reference to the Bill, and allow it to proceed. The Chairman of the Standing Orders Committee has told the House that no doubt the promoters have no *locus standi* before the House. But the appeal is made on another ground—namely, that there are great works to be executed, and that representations have been made urging my right hon. Friend the Member for the University of Oxford (Sir John R. Mowbray) to allow the Bill to proceed, in order that employment may be given to a large number of deserving men who are now unhappily thrown out of employment. I must say that, looking at the whole facts of the case, I trust the House will be prepared to assent to the request which has been made to them in favour of the Bill, and that they will allow it to be proceeded with in the way suggested.

MR. ARCH (Norfolk, N.W.): I have some knowledge of the district through which it is proposed to carry this railway, and I know that there is a very strong desire on the part of the trading population, as well as on the part of the working classes of the district affected by the measure, that the works should be executed if possible. I have no interest in the railway myself; but the reason I have risen to support the Motion of my hon. Friend is that representing as I do the class that will suffer most from the railway not being constructed, I would humbly ask the House to accede to the wish of my hon. Friend, and to allow the Bill to proceed, so that thousands of hungry men and women may be fed.

Motion *agreed to.*

Ordered, That the Resolution of the Standing Orders Committee of the 19th day of February last, with respect to the Felixstowe, Ipswich, and Midlands Railway Petition, together with the said Petition, and the Bill annexed thereto, be referred back to the said Committee, and that they have power to inquire whether there are any special circumstances which render it just and expedient that the Standing Orders should be dispensed with in respect of the said Petition.—(*Mr. Everett.*)

COMMONS REGULATION (HAYLING) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department, Mr. Broadhurst.*)

MR. E. N. BUXTON (Essex, Walthamstow): In rising to move, as an Amendment, that the Bill be read a second time upon this day six months, I may say that I was not aware that my hon. Friend who has moved the second reading of the Bill intended simply to make that Motion formally and without comment. I am told that it is a somewhat unusual proceeding to move the rejection of a Bill of this kind which has received the approval of one of the Departments of the State. I, therefore, apologize to the House for the course which I feel myself compelled to take. But there are exceptional circumstances in this case which justify a departure from the usual course in dealing with Bills of this nature. In the first place, it seems to me that this Bill proposes, under the guise of a law, and a very useful law, to inflict a great injustice on the inhabitants of this district and on those of the neighbouring town of Portsmouth. The inhabitants of the district are very strongly opposed to this scheme. As an illustration of the feeling against the proposal, perhaps I may read an extract from a letter which I have received from the Vicar of the parish, who has constituted himself the champion of the cause of his poorer neighbours. He says—

> "In fact, it is not too much to say that there is not one single inhabitant in its favour, apart from those persons who are either personally interested or who are under the influence, direct or indirect, of the promoters. There are a large number of parishioners who are afraid of offending somebody if they take an active part; but nevertheless they are sincere in their opposition to the measure, which threatens to rob them of that free, unrestricted use of a common which has been their undisputed right for centuries."

The inhabitants of the parish have sent a Petition to this House, passed by a large majority at a public meeting, in which they say—I will not read the whole of the Petition, but merely a few words—

> "It is not desirable, in the interests of the commoners and of the public generally"——

[*Cries of* "Order!"] I was not aware that I was not in Order in quoting the words of the Petition. I am sorry that my want of experience of the Forms of the House should have led me into error; but if I am not able to read the actual words of the Petition, I believe it will not be irregular to state that the Memorial urges in the strongest language that this scheme is designed only in the interest of one or two individuals, and that nobody will benefit by it but those individuals. That Petition was carried in a public meeting, at which I believe 113 voted for the Petition, and only 39 were induced to vote against it, even after the strongest pressure had been brought to bear by those who are personally interested in the scheme. Then, again, although this scheme was brought before a Committee of the House of Commons, and was passed by that Body, yet I would urge that that Committee was anything but unanimous in the matter. It was carried by the casting vote of the Chairman, the Committee, as a whole, being equally divided. I should be very sorry to say anything against the Land Commissioners, who have sanctioned the scheme. They are public servants, and I am quite sure they are actuated by the strongest desire to do that which is for the benefit of the public. I disagree with them in the proposal; but I would be the last person to say anything against public servants who have not an opportunity of replying in this House. But, notwithstanding this, and speaking not only of this scheme, but of other schemes which I have seen and examined, I think they are a little too much inclined to overrate the rights of the wealthy landowners, and to underrate the rights of the commoners. I also think that they are a little too much permeated with the traditions—the unfortunate traditions as I look upon them—of the Inclosure Commissioners, which still, to some extent, seem to govern their proposals. Those traditions as to the importance and desirableness of inclosing as much land as possible, no doubt, had their justification some 40 or 50 years ago, when it was of importance to cultivate as much land as possible in order to produce as much food as possible; but circumstances have altered, and now it is, in many cases, more expensive to grow food than to import it. Another argument, which is of more importance now than formerly, is the necessity of keeping open the lungs of the great towns by means of these open spaces. It was only the other day that the House rejected, and justly rejected, another scheme—a scheme of the Governors of the Charterhouse. It related to an ancient historical building; the present scheme relates to an ancient common. There is this difference between the two schemes—that whereas the promoters of the Charterhouse scheme were actuated only by the purest of public motives, although many of us thought them wrong, in this instance the Bill is promoted only by those who would get a certain personal and selfish advantage from it. I think, therefore, the House ought to reject it by even a larger majority than they did in the previous case. Now, this common is a most beautiful one, facing the sea, on Hayling Island, opposite the Isle of Wight. It extends over the whole length of the southern side of the Island. Colonel Sandeman, the chief promoter of the scheme, in his evidence, said with regard to one part of the common which it is proposed to enclose, that—"It was proposed to do so mainly because no other use can be made of it," and that it was "uneven with nothing but shingle and gorse upon it." I cannot agree with the opinion that common land is of no use because it has nothing but shingle and gorse upon it, and is uneven. In my belief the common is a most picturesque one, facing as it does the sea—a most beautiful sea—and it is seen to the highest advantage at the present time. If I could only picture it to hon. Members as it is now, I am satisfied that I should insure the success of my Motion. This gorse, if of no use, is, at this moment, an object of the greatest beauty; and I venture to think it is a great mistake—and a view too commonly held—that these wastes, as they are called, are of no use. Then there is this other point in regard to the proposal. I have examined very carefully the deposited plans of this proposal, and I have visited the district in order to look at all the surrounding circumstances. I find, to my great surprise, a circumstance which was not before the Committee of which I was a Member—namely, that the deposited plans excluded from the common, as they did not form part of it, certain recent illegal inclosures. I certainly do not blame the Commissioners for this. One of them told me they had no option in the matter, and that they could only deal with that part of the common for which they had a requisition from those who applied to them; and, of course, in this case, the promoters did not include these illegal inclosures which they have themselves illegally made. At the same time, however, I think the House should be very cautious in sanctioning and stereotyping such illegal inclosures, which would greatly strengthen the hands of those guilty of such illegalities and weaken the power of their poorer neighbours in the district. It is proposed to take out of the common, in addition to the illegal inclosures to which I have referred, one acre, four and a-half acres, and 10 acres. I have not very much to say against the proposal to take the one acre. It is proposed to reserve it for the purpose of paying the cost of the maintenance of the common. I do not think that the price even of one acre is really required for that purpose. I do not think, using the words of the promoters of the scheme, that it is necessary to improve the common at all; all that is required is to leave the common as it is. I do not believe that the promoters can improve the common which is already sufficiently beautiful by constructing a Marine Esplanade. Then it is proposed to take four and a-half acres for the purpose of paying the costs of obtaining this scheme. Now, I do think that those who are to benefit by it should themselves pay the cost of getting it; and I cannot see why so large a piece as four and a-half acres should be taken from the common for that purpose. Why take four and a-half acres? These four and a-half acres are a beautiful hollow in the common which happens to lie in front of the residence of the Sandemans, who are the chief promoters of the scheme; and if this portion is inclosed it would project in a most offensive way into the common. Anyone coming along in future upon the landward side of the common would have to make a considerable detour in order to get round these four and a-half acres. But why should it be proposed that these four and a-half acres, if they are necessary to be sold for the purposes of this scheme, should be sold to the promoters and to no one else? If it is really desired to get the greatest amount of money for the purpose mentioned, surely the land ought to be sold by public auction. Then it is proposed to take 10 acres of the common in exchange for allotments for the poor. This proposal has a captivating sound about it, and it might be thought, without examination, to be beneficial to the poor; but, as a matter of fact, no allotments are required in this district. There was evidence before the Committee that there were very few cottage gardens or field gardens. Now, I have caused a very careful inquiry to be made, and I find that almost the whole of the cottages which are without gardens, that are actually on the common, are used by lodging-house keepers, and are let to visitors in the summer. They are mostly kept by widows who could not keep up a garden if they had one. A considerable portion of the cottages which have gardens are unlet, and it is therefore clear that there is no necessity for the proposed allotments. But the question is, is it a fair exchange? It is proposed to give, in the neighbourhood of good agricultural land, 10 acres in exchange for a similar acreage taken from the common, and to turn the latter into building land with a frontage to the sea. In the first place, it is not only proposed to take 10 acres from the common, but it is also specially provided by the Bill that the 10 acres that are necessary for the development of building are to be taken out of the common. That shows the spirit in which the scheme is promoted. It does not mean 10 acres, but a great deal more, that the commoners will have to give up. Again, the labourers are expected to pay rent to the lord of the manor for their allotments; but the lord of the manor is not asked to pay rent—he is to have the land for nothing. I endeavoured, but found it difficult, to get from the witnesses examined before the Committee any evidence as to the actual value of land fronting the sea. I failed to get any satisfactory answer; but the chief promoter of the scheme said that it had only a prospective value. The solicitor to the lord of the manor said that it was only worth 10*s*. an acre to let except for its prospective value. Now, will the House believe that at that very time when this evidence was given on oath before the Committee the lord of the manor, whose solicitor swore to this fact, anticipating the decision of the House of Commons, had agreed to sell a portion of these 10 acres to the chief promoter of the Bill at the rate of £400 per acre? I am perfectly aware that it is what is called an accommodation price, and that it is only about half-an-acre that the lord of the manor has agreed to sell in this way; but what value can you attach to the evidence of the man who spoke of the land as being worth £50 per acre when he had only sold one-twentieth part of it for £200? The agreement says—and if the House is curious to know how I got the information, I may say that I have it from the son of the lord of the manor himself, who is strongly opposed to the scheme—the agreement relating to the title to the land says that there was no title whatever. The one only argument I have been able to hear for granting this scheme is, that unless it is approved the lord of the manor will arbitrarily inclose the whole common. This argument is used in a letter to *The Times* this morning by one of the solicitors engaged in the case, who asserts that the common is the absolute property of the lord of the manor and of the copyholders; but the writer loses sight of the fact that a single copyholder can prevent any inclosure, and that any of the commoners who have rights of pasturage, turbary, of cutting furze, and of digging gravel can assert those rights, and prevent any illegal inclosure. An attempt was made last week to force the hands of the House of Commons, and to impress these arguments upon them by actually inclosing a portion of the common. A body of workmen were brought over from Portsmouth or Chatham, or somewhere from a distance, for they hardly ventured to employ local workmen, for the purpose of erecting a fence upon the common. I do not think it ought to be described as a lawless proceeding, although it was so described to me this morning; but I am told that the commoners took the matter into their own hands and asserted their rights by pulling down the fence. Well, Sir, I very much doubt whether if these commoners had been wealthy and powerful any attempt would have been made to inclose the common; but it is because the wealthy landowner presumes upon the weakness and poverty of his neighbours that these encroachments are made. There is a very strong feeling, not only in this district, but throughout the country, that there has been too many of these encroachments by lords of the manor. It is not suprising that in these days we should hear something of a cry for restitution. I have heard the word "ransom" lately. It is a word I do not particularly approve of, and it does not commend itself much to hon. Gentlemen opposite; but this is a case in which ransom is demanded by the rich from the poor; it is a case in which a wealthy lord of the manor says in effect to his poorer neighbours—"Unless you give me this bribe, I will take the whole into my own hands, and, no matter what your rights may be, I will inclose the common." I do not think the House will be prepared to sanction such a course. In his letter to *The Times* this morning, the solicitor says that if property is not to be deprived of its rights, this Bill ought to pass. I think the use of that expression is a mockery. It is a mockery to talk of rights of property when the scheme ignores rights as real as those of the lord of the manor, but which the commoners are not in a position to maintain in a Court of Law. I am sorry to have taken up so much of the time of the House; but it is not only in regard to Hayling Common that I have felt it my duty to bring this question before the House. The House must remember that this is only a typical case, and that it has been, or will be, reproduced in numerous instances all over the country. It is highly desirable that this kind of thing should be stopped by the House of Commons. I myself would like to see the law strengthened, and the presumption of law made against the man who incloses, instead of leaving it to the poor and weak to assert their rights, if they desire to do so. Those who make these encroachments are indulging in nothing less than a game of brag, in the hope that nobody will be bold enough to resist them. I trust the House of Commons will throw out the Bill, not only on behalf of the commoners of Hayling, but also on account of the numerous poor commoners throughout the country, whose rights are similarly threatened. Those hon. Members who are in favour of the preservation of open spaces will certainly support the rejection of the Bill.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I have great pleasure in seconding the Motion of my hon. Friend, the object of which is to prevent, as far as possible, an encroachment upon the rights of the public. This is an attempt to take away the land of the poor, and to give it to wealthy English landowners. I hold that no one has a right to sell that which belongs to posterity; and I hold further that the system we have adopted of allowing private persons to inclose common lands is a false one. I trust the Government will see its way to place on the Commission someone more directly connected with the working classes than any present Member of it. I am thoroughly opposed to any further encroachments of this kind. We have had more than enough of them already, and I hope that the House will support my hon. Friend in resisting the further progress of this Bill.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Edward Buxton.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Wexford, N.) seconded the Motion.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. T. M. Healy,*)—put, and *negatived.*

SIR WALTER B. BARTTELOT (Sussex, North-West): I know how much the House dislikes anything like a discussion on a question of this kind; but I also know how anxious the House is to arrive at a just conclusion. I am one of those who never for one moment put myself in opposition to the views or wishes of the House. Therefore, I propose to be as brief as possible in the remarks I feel it my duty to make upon this question. My hon. Friend the Member for Essex (Mr. Buxton) has stated an undoubted fact—that it is seldom, indeed I believe this is the only time, a question of this kind has come before the House on the second reading of a Bill of this nature. I do not object to its being brought forward when there are good grounds for it; but I hardly think my hon. Friend has put those grounds before the House as fairly as he might have done. I think he will admit—I am quite sure he will not deny—that the Committee on the Bill, of which he was a Member, did, as far as I, who was the humble Chairman of the Committee, was able to judge, their best to endeavour to elicit from the witnesses all the evidence that could be collected. We cross-examined the witnesses minutely and most carefully; and I think that if hon. Members had heard the evidence of those who were opposed to the scheme, they would agree that, as far as the Committee were concerned, they were fully justified in passing the Bill. I would like to say one word in reference to the Commissioners. My hon. Friend has made a strong statement about them. He says that the Commissioners very often look to the interests of those who are rich and large landowners rather than to the interests of the poor. Now, I have served upon the Committee which took this Bill into consideration for many years.

MR. E. N. BUXTON: The hon. and gallant Baronet has somewhat misunderstood me. I said they gave too much weight to the rights of the lords of the manor and rather undervalued the rights of the commoners. I do not mean to say that they have been intentionally guilty of any act of unfairness.

SIR WALTER B. BARTTELOT: There are several questions to be considered. In the first place, the rights of the lords of the manor. I do not think there is anybody in this House who is prepared to deny that where the lord of the manor has rights, he ought to be compensated for those rights if they are taken away. In this case, the lord of the manor has not asked to be compensated. The lord of the manor has agreed—and I think the hon. Member for Norfolk (Mr. Arch) was rather taken with this point—that land shall be provided for allotments for his poorer neighbours. We are all anxious upon the subject, and the Committee endeavoured to obtain the best land that could be procured in Hayling Island for allotments for the poor. I am glad to see that the hon. Member assents to that proposal. The lord of the manor agreed to give up 10 acres of the best agricultural land in his possession on Hayling Island, to be selected by the Commissioners. It is freehold land worth £75 per acre, and the land on the common that he is to receive is absolutely worth nothing. ["Oh!"] Yes; that is the absolute fact. It is worth nothing unless building speculations are carried out. I thought I said that at the commencement. If these building speculations are not carried out this land is worth absolutely nothing. It is not worth at this moment £5 an acre, and no man would give 5*s*. an acre to rent it. All that I say is, that the Committee had, in the first place, to consider the proposal by the Commissioners that 10 acres of agricultural land should be exchanged for the 10 acres it was proposed to give up. I think the Committee were perfectly justified in agreeing to that proposal, because they knew very well that if building speculations are to be carried out there will be a large employment of labour; and they had reason to believe also that the cottagers want some land for their allotments. Therefore, it was provided, and we thought it right to agree to the proposition, that the lord of the manor should have 10 acres somewhere else for the 10 acres he was prepared to give up. We may have been right, or we may have been wrong, but we thought it was only an act of justice to the lord of the manor. As to the rights of the commoners, they have been carefully looked after, and will be absolutely maintained intact. It was also agreed that, as far as the parish was concerned, no extra rates should be placed on the parish without its consent, and that three conservators should be elected by the ratepayers, and three by the copyholders. Then comes the question of the interests of the general public in the matter. I am anxious in the interests of the general public that all these open spaces should be preserved; but the present is not a case of inclosure, but of regulation, and I venture to say that the regulation of that common would be of great advantage to the prospect of Southsea, Portsmouth, and the neighbourhood. Will anybody get up and say that at the present moment this common is not in a terrible state, covered with glass bottles, old hats, and rubbish, all of which the inhabitants would be glad to see cleared away? I venture to say that in the interests of the public, in the interests of the copyholders, and in the interests also of the lord of the manor, it will be a wise thing to settle the question while we can. I do not know what my hon. Friend the Chairman of Committees (Mr. Courtney) may have to say, or whether he will suggest that if the House disapproves of this arrangement the Bill should be referred back to the Committee for reconsideration; but I am afraid, that if such a course is taken, the lord of the manor may refuse to give his consent to relinquish rights which he is now willing to dispose of, and I am afraid that he and others who have power over the common may find it to their interest to agree among themselves to the inclosure of the whole of the common. I can only say that it was with the view of doing the best I could in the interest of all parties concerned that I, for one, gave my vote as I did in the matter.

MR. JASPER MORE (Shropshire, Ludlow): As I consider that it has been in consequence of the vote which I gave in Committee that this subject has been brought before the House, I desire to say a word upon the subject. I think the Committee would have very little to complain of in regard to the way in which the case was brought before them, if it had not been for the fact that the opponents of the scheme were unable to go to much expense. Their case was represented before the Committee by the Vicar of the parish. He was evidently in favour of having the question disposed of, and all his evidence went in the direction of a compromise. Since that time meetings have been held in Hayling Island, at which the lord of the manor has entirely changed sides on the question, and a Petition against the inclosure has been signed by the great majority of the inhabitants. If the Committee had had that expression of opinion before them, I need not say that it might, perhaps, have materially affected their decision. As to what fell from the hon. Member for Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell), I should like to remind him that a short time ago the hon. Member for North Paddington (Mr L. Cohen) gave us a list of inclosures which have taken place in regard to common lands. I know that there are many difficulties to be contended with in the matter, and that in some instances the landowners and lords of the manor are not to be blamed for the course they have taken.

MR. FINCH-HATTON (Lincolnshire, Spalding): I desire to say a word in explanation of the course which I propose to take. I should be sorry if it were thought that in giving my vote on this question I was opposed to granting allotments to labourers; but if hon. Members will look at the matter they will see that allotments are not required in this case. We have it on the authority of the Vicar of the parish, and also of an Independent minister, that there is at this moment under offer to the labourers land suitable for allotments, which cannot be so let, and that the labourers, who certainly are the best judges in their own case, prefer to retain the independent rights they possess in this common. I was very much surprised to hear the hon. and gallant Baronet (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) talk of the value of the land proposed to be given up as merely a prospective value; he cannot be aware that the agent of the property has already made an offer himself to rent one acre, not at 5*s*., but at £30, a-year for 99 years. That does not look as if the land merely possessed a prospective value. It is certainly not a prospective offer; but it is contingent on this scheme passing the House of Commons. I think the hon. and gallant Baronet could not have heard the remark which fell from the hon. Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Buxton) when he told the House that a small portion, comprising only half-an-acre, had been agreed to be sold for £200. It is probable that Hayling Common may require regulation; but what I object to is the price that is to be paid for its regulation. I think that the Land Commissioners, unintentionally, no doubt, misled the public when they said that this was not an inclosure scheme. It is a scheme which proposes that one-eighth of the common should be inclosed, and that is *pro tanto* an inclosure scheme. I shall certainly give an earnest vote in favour of the Amendment.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.): As a Member of the Committee I wish to say a few words before the House goes to a division, in order to prevent the House from being misled in the matter. It is said that the Bill proposes to take away a certain portion of common land on the Island of Hayling. But the Bill contains a provision by which the lord of the manor is to give 10 acres of his own best agricultural land in exchange for 10 acres of shingle; and it is a mistake to suppose that those 10 acres are to be taken out of the common. It is extremely easy for hon. Members to run away with an idea, as the hon. Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Buxton) and the hon. Member for Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell) have, who talked about inclosures going on all over the country, and maintained that the House of Commons is called upon to put down its foot upon them—it is easy for hon. Members to express that view. But the House has provided the means of looking closely into the circumstances of this case, and I am sure that no Committee ever approached the business they had in hand with greater care than the Members of the Committee upon this Bill did. It was our desire to see that ample justice should be done to all parties, and that any opposition to the scheme should be fully brought out. It is not the case of poor men who could not be heard. A noble Lord who owns two acres of land down there was heard before the Committee. I knew his case privately, and I questioned that noble Lord most closely in order to get out everything he had to say against the scheme. He was altogether unable to make out any case against it, and he owned as much to me afterwards. The hon. Member for Norfolk (Mr. Arch) very frankly expressed his desire before the Committee to provide allotments for labourers; there are 67 cottages in the neighbourhood of the common which are without gardens at all, and it is proposed that 10 acres shall be given by the lord of the manor, not from the common, but taken from agricultural land in exchange for shingle, in order to provide allotments. It is altogether an error to say that there is no need for allotments, considering the number of cottages in the neighbourhood of the common which are without gardens. Personally, I would not build a cottage, nor have one built, that had no garden allotment. I cannot understand hon. Members getting up here and saying that allotments are not required. We have the evidence of the Vicar of the parish, who owned that they would be a great boon. When asked if 10 acres would be sufficient for allotments, he said that they would be quite sufficient; but he never said that allotments were not required. There is no ground whatever for the assertion that this is an Inclosure Bill. It is a Preservation Bill against the encroachments which have been going on on this common, and I noticed myself on the maps a very large space indeed which has been encroached upon and inclosed, and which cannot now be recovered. The landowner is now anxious to purchase part of this land, and I beg to say that, as far as I can see, there is no reason why he should not purchase it fairly. It must be sold to somebody in order to cover the expense of this application, and why should it not be sold to him? I may remind the hon. Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Buxton) that there is such a thing as having inclosure on the brain. I am afraid the hon. Member must be suffering from something of the kind, because two other cases which came before the Committee, which were wholly unopposed, were watched by the hon. Member for a long time, as if upon some ground which was not before the Committee they must be objectionable. I say that this scheme has been fully and fairly considered by the Committee, and, although it was only carried by the Chairman's casting vote, the House would do no injustice in passing the Bill; whereas, if it is thrown out on the grounds stated, there will be a greater chance of injustice being done in the matter.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin): I will not detain the House more than a few minutes; but I think that I ought to make one or two observations. In the first place, I must point out to the House that after all this Bill comes before the House with some authority in its favour. The Land Commission approaches a matter of this kind with a good deal of experience, and, I think, with a judicial temper, and is able to examine the facts far more carefully and accurately, and to come to a correct appreciation of them better than the House can possibly do. The scheme of the Land Commission was afterwards referred to a Select Committee — a Hybrid Committee—specially appointed to consider these Bills. It was their duty to hear witnesses and sift all the facts; and that Committee, although, in this case, by the narrow majority of the Chairman's vote, approved the scheme of the Land Commission, and recommended its adoption by the House. Under these circumstances, the House ought to hesitate a little before they set aside what has been thus deliberately decided. They ought to support the decision of their own Committee, arrived at after full inquiry and examination, after having received a Report from the Land Commission, and after having heard all the evidence. It would, I think, be unfortunate to set aside their decision after the case had been fully sifted and deliberately threshed out by the Committee. My own impression is in favour of standing by the Report of the Committee in a case like this. [*Cries of* "No!"] I am surprised at the amount of feeling shown about the matter, and to find that there are Members below the Gangway who seem to think that the decision of the Land Commission ought to be discredited in these matters. The question has been discussed as if the proposal was to inclose the whole of the common. The scheme is primarily one for regulation, with the inclosure, at the outside, of about one-eighth of the common. Out of 120 acres 105 are to be maintained as a free and open space. I have the authority of the Land Commission for saying that the whole common which it is desired to regulate has hitherto been left absolutely unprotected, and subject to spoliation of all kinds, and therefore it has been felt that it is desirable to make some provisions for its regulation in the same manner as we have regulated the commons in the neighbourhood of London. The only question before the House, therefore, is whether the conditions of the regulation are such as are reasonable or not. In order to carry out these provisions four and a-half acres of the common are, it is true, to be sold at a price to be fixed by the Land Commission. The right of purchasing is to be given to a neighbouring proprietor; but if that proprietor refuses to give the price fixed upon by the Land Commission, then the land is to be sold by auction in order to defray the expenses of the Bill. In regard to the other 10 acres, as has been pointed out by the right hon. Member for Manchester (Sir James Fergusson), they are to go in exchange for 10 acres of agricultural land; and, on the whole, the advantage will be with the inhabitants, who will get 10 acres of good agricultural land for allotments in exchange for 10 acres of common land. It is said that allotments are not wanted. In the evidence given before the Committee it was shown that allotments are wanted, and badly wanted; and the same view was arrived at by the Land Commissioners. Since then a gentleman, who was a strong opponent of the whole scheme, has offered land of his own for allotments; and the conditions are therefore somewhat changed since this scheme was drawn up and approved by the authorities. I would, therefore, strongly urge upon the House not to take upon itself the determination of the question and the responsibility of throwing out the Bill, but to refer the whole matter back to the Committee to see what they are prepared to recommend under the changed conditions. That, I think, is the best step the House can take, and it will give all parties who are interested in the matter ample opportunity for bringing their conclusions before the Committee. I would, therefore, strongly recommend that instead of throwing out the Bill now it should be sent back to the Select Committee with an Instruction to re-examine the facts—such as those which the hon. Member for Shropshire (Mr. Jasper More) has brought under the notice of the House. I certainly do not think the House, in the absence of further information, ought to reject the Bill.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I notice that this Bill has on the back of it the names of two Members of Her Majesty's Government—the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Childers) and the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Broadhurst). But so far we have no information as to what course Her Majesty's Government propose to take in the matter. The hon. Gentleman the Chairman of Committees has thrown out a suggestion which I am inclined to think may posssibly meet the approval of hon. Members near me who are in favour of the Amendment. ["No!"] Then, if it does not meet the approval of my hon. Friends, neither does it meet that of hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House, and I shall have nothing more to say upon that point. I had thought that it might be possible, by recommitting the Bill, to take further evidence, so as to prevent the scheme being converted into an Act of spoliation. I, for one, should be inclined to support that course; but in the event of such a course not approving itself to the House, and in the event of Her Majesty's Government not being able to give us some assurance that the measure will not be proceeded with—at any rate, with their sanction, I shall feel it my duty, and I hope I shall be supported by the House, to resist this Bill to the utmost. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down talked a good deal about the dignity of the House, and he apparently wishes us to understand that it is altogether beneath the dignity of the House to defend the public rights against the encroachment of individuals. The broad principle upon which to argue a question like this is not whether due care has been taken in making provision for allotments, or anything of that kind, but whether you are not dealing with public rights—namely, the rights of commoners, which are the inalienable rights of the public and of posterity. Are we prepared to sacrifice the rights of posterity to suit the exigencies of the present moment? It is not the question whether the copyholders and the lords of the manor, and others interested in this common, have agreed to this scheme. The question is, What are the public rights? The public rights descend to posterity, and they are not to be deliberately thrown away year by year by votes of this House. All public rights should descend to posterity; that is a clear issue. Hon. Gentlemen have told us that this land must be sold. I say there is no "must" about it. There is no earthly reason why you should give this land to the landowners to convert into valuable building sites. We have been told that an offer has already been made for an acre of it for building purposes at a rent of £30 a-year for 99 years. That, then, is not prospective value. It shows that this is a valuable property; and it is all very well for a landowner to pose as a benefactor to the public by offering to give away 10 acres of land, which may be worth next to nothing, in order to secure to himself the enjoyment of land which is worth from £300 to £400 an acre. That is one of the most curious instances of generosity the House has ever been called upon to witness. I am reminded of a saying of the late Earl of Beaconsfield, who described a certain course of policy as one of "blundering and plundering." I think I cannot do better than stigmatize all such attempts as this—and there have been hundreds of similar cases all over the country—as a policy of robbery and jobbery.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. BROADHURST) (Birmingham, Bordesley): The hon. Member complains that the House has heard nothing from either of the Members of the Government whose names are on the back of the Bill. I think it is right that I should state that Her Majesty's Government have really very little authority in matters of this kind, and that they have had no part whatever in framing these schemes, which are drawn up by residents in the neighbourhood, or by those possessing common rights over the land proposed to be dealt with, with the sanction of the Land Commissioners; and the only part which the Government takes in the matter is to move the Parliamentary stages in this House of the respective schemes, very often, I apprehend, with a very slight knowledge indeed of the contents of the measures intrusted to their care. In the present instance, I should like to make the frank confession that, up to 4 o'clock yesterday, I knew nothing whatever about the merits of this proposal. I knew that there was such a scheme in existence; but as to the precise proposal, or plan, or anything of the kind, nothing has ever come before me, and there was no necessity, under the system by which these schemes are prepared, that it should. With regard to the suggestion that has been made by my hon. Friend the Chairman of Committees, that the Bill should be referred back to the Committee upstairs, that is certainly one way out of the difficulty in which we are placed; but it is for the House to determine the question for itself. I do not know whether my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Buxton) and those who are acting with him are prepared to accept that suggestion. It is for them to decide. The Government do not wish to exercise any influence or authority whatever in disposing of the question. I suppose my hon. Friend knows perfectly well the considerable responsibility he incurs in moving the rejection of the scheme. He does it, however, with full knowledge of that responsibility, and with a very large experience of similar questions in regard to commons. I presume that he is prepared to accept that responsibility. At the same time, I should like it to be understood by the House that, as far as I understand, the question of allotments is not by any means a pressing question. The Land Commissioners, who have always, as far as my experience goes, studiously maintained the rights of the residents in the neighbourhood of these commons, did in this, as in other similar cases, insist upon provision being made for allotments; and, as I have said, the necessity for providing allotments is not urgent. An hon. Friend near me stated that there has been a recent addition made to land available for allotment purposes. I have received a letter from the locality, written by a working man, who says that there has been ground available for allotments for a long time past, but that the whole of it has not been hired by those who live in the neighbourhood of the common.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: Because it is in the wrong place—not suitable for the commoners, while this land is very convenient.

Mr. BROADHURST: I do not understand that to be the case; but the statement made by one of the witnesses has been flatly contradicted. I have only mentioned the matter in order that the House may have as full knowledge as possible of the real bearings of the question before the House. It has been stated in evidence that there were only 13 cottages possessing allotments. In the communication already referred to, which I received from an inhabitant, the reverse appears to be the case—namely, that there are not more than 13 cottages without allotments. That is a very different circumstance from that of a locality in which there is a large demand for allotments. However, I have only risen for the purpose of explaining to my hon. Friend that, as far as I am concerned, as representing the Government on this occasion, we have no very strong feeling either way, and it is for the House to decide whether it will accept or reject the scheme.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): As a general rule, I quite agree with my hon. Friend the Chairman of Committees that it is desirable, before rejecting a Bill of this kind, to refer it back to the Select Committee by whom it has been considered; but in the present case I would remind the House that this scheme was only carried in the Select Committee on Commons by the casting vote of the hon. and gallant Baronet opposite (Sir Walter B. Barttelot) the Chairman—a Gentleman for whom we all have the highest possible respect, but who entertains an exaggerated view of the rights of lords of the manor. We have also before us the fact that one Member of that Committee has also come forward and admitted that he was mistaken in his views, and that he is now prepared to vote against the scheme. Therefore, under these circumstances, the only effect of referring the Bill back to the Select Committee would be its rejection, and the House may save the Committee that trouble by rejecting it themselves. My hon. Friend the Chairman of Committees has contended that the House ought to pay great respect to the views of the Land Commissioners; but I may say that the only way in which the Society for the Preservation of Commons, with which I am connected, has effected its objects has been by rejecting the views of the Commissioners, and fighting case after case on its merits in this House. It appears to me that in that manner only can we hope to induce the Commissioners to take a larger and more public view of their duties in these cases. I do not propose to go into the merits of this scheme; but I have come to the conclusion that as the real purpose of the scheme is not the regulation of the common, but selling a portion of the ground, I trust the House will reject the Bill.

Sir WALTER B. BARTTELOT (Sussex, North-West): I wish to say a few words in the way of explanation. I must say that when the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) makes a personal accusation against me of having unduly favoured the lords of the manor, he is unjust, and altogether mistaken. I repudiate the accusation most strongly; and I am bound to add that the right hon. Gentleman is, I regret to say, exceedingly apt to make remarks of that kind of other people.

Original Question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question," put, and *negatived*.

Words *added.*

Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

Second Reading *put off* for six months.

QUESTIONS.

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STATE OF IRELAND.

MR. BYRNE (Wicklow, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If his attention has been drawn to the proceedings at the Spring Quarter Sessions, held at Wicklow, as reported in *The Wicklow People* on the 24th April. When the Chairman, Mr. Darley, said—

> "I congratulate you and all other officials connected with the county Wicklow. I have just come from the counties of Kildare and Carlow. In the county of Kildare I was presented with white gloves, equally handsome as those which I have just had the pleasure of receiving from Mr. Kennedy, there being no criminal cases there. In Carlow also there was no criminal case, and at Baltinglass there was only one case upon the calendar, and that was taken out of our court and sent to assizes. The consequence is that I have had no criminal cases to try in the county of Kildare, the county of Carlow, or the county of Wicklow. That speaks very well for the peaceful condition of these counties. I hope such a state of things may long continue. So far as the county of Wicklow is concerned, I must say that, from my experience, I have been always able to point out that there has been no crime of a very serious character within its borders. Therefore, I have greater reason now for congratulating the magistrates, you gentlemen of the grand jury, the high sheriff, and the other county officers, upon the peaceful state of the wide and important area over which their duties extend;"

and, is the peaceful condition of these counties a fair specimen of the state of most Irish counties?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The state of the county of Wicklow, and of the neighbouring counties of Kildare and Carlow, is eminently satisfactory as regards crime of every kind; so satisfactory, indeed, that I hardly think it would be correct to take those counties as representing the state of Ireland generally. At the same time, it is right to say that the Returns of agrarian crime from the whole country do not show any serious amount of such crime at present.

THE PARKS (METROPOLIS)—THE CARRIAGE ROADS.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the honourable Member representing the First Commissioner of Works, Whether the carriage roads between Buckingham Palace and Hyde Park Corner, between Storey's Gate and Marlborough House, between the Horse Guard's Gate, Whitehall, and the Duke of York Steps, between Storey's Gate and Buckingham Palace, are maintained directly or indirectly from public funds contributed by taxes or rates; and, if so, by what authority and in what manner is their use by the public restricted; and, if, considering the great pressure of traffic in the streets, especially at this season, and the inconvenience and expense occasioned by such restrictions to many inhabitants of the Metropolis and visitors thereto, Her Majesty's Government will take steps for their removal or modification?

MR. LEVESON GOWER (A LORD of the TREASURY) (Stafford, N.W.), in reply, said, that the roads in question were maintained out of the funds voted in respect of the Royal Parks. The restrictions as to the use of the roads had been laid down in former times, and had been maintained in the Parks Regulation Act, 1872. The First Commissioner of Works was not aware of any intention on the part of the Government to make any alteration in the use of the roads.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT gave Notice to move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, no restrictions inconsistent with public safety, the exigencies of traffic, and the comfort or convenience of the Royal Family, should be placed upon the use of roads in the Metropolis and other populous places maintained by rates or taxes."

POST OFFICE—KIVETON PARK, YORK, W.R.

MR. SHIRLEY (Yorkshire, W.R., Doncaster) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the Postmaster General will cause inquiry to be made into the reasonableness of the frequent complaints of the inhabitants of Kiveton Park, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, about alleged defects in the system of delivering and collecting letters in the district, with a view to the removal of all grounds for such complaints?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The matter to which the hon. Member has called the attention of the Postmaster General is now being inquired into; and as soon as the facts are ascertained a communication shall be sent to the hon. Member.

CENTRAL ASIA—MISSION TO THIBET.

MR. HUTTON (Manchester, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, What are the special objects of the expedition now being organised to proceed to Thibet under Mr. Colman Macaulay; and, whether Her Majesty's Government will urge upon the Indian Government the promotion of the interests of commerce, by appointing to that expedition a gentleman well versed in mercantile affairs?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. STAFFORD HOWARD) (Gloucester, Thornbury): The object of the Mission is to confer with the Chinese Commissioners and the Lhassa Government as to the resumption of commercial intercourse between Thibet and India. In reply to the second part of the hon. Member's Question, I have to say that the Secretary of State has been in communication with the Government of India on the subject, but that, looking to the delicate nature of the Mission, it has not been thought advisable to interfere with the arrangements already made by adding a special commercial Representative. I may add that Mr. Elwes, who has been given permission to accompany Mr. Macaulay, is competent to obtain all requisite information on commercial matters.

ARMY—CO-OPERATIVE STORES.

MR. HOOPER (Cork, S.E.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he is aware that Sergeant Hooly, 2nd West Suffolk Regiment, canteen steward of Cork garrison, was dismissed from that position for having accepted a cheque for £24 for his own use (after he had been in office only two months) from the contractors for the supply of the garrison canteen, namely, the Dublin Branch of the Junior Army and Navy Stores; whether, in consequence of this discovery, the contract was withdrawn from the Junior Army and Navy Association, and entrusted to a local firm; whether this Association and the Army and Navy Co-operative Association supply most of the regiments in Ireland; whether the shareholders of these Associations consist largely of military officers; whether he is in possession of any evidence to show that the men of the Army would prefer to have the option of dealing locally for their supplies; whether he will have an independent investigation into the present system; and, whether he will have a Return presented to this House of the names of all Army officers who are shareholders in the Supply Associations above mentioned?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): It is reported by the General Officer at Cork that the garrison canteen sergeant was found to be in possession of a cheque for £23 10*s*. from the Junior Army and Navy Stores, which he alleged was intended as a present to him. The man was dismissed from his position, and the Committee of the canteen are stated to have transferred their custom from the Junior Army and Navy Stores to some other quarter. With regard to the remainder of the series of Questions put by the hon. Member, I must disclaim any official knowledge. The affairs of canteens are managed by their own committees—an arrangement believed to be very acceptable to the soldiers. It is well known that a large number of the canteens obtain their supplies in whole or in part from one or other of the large Co-operative Societies; but I should be unwilling to seem even to limit their independence by requiring Returns upon the subject. I believe that many officers are shareholders of Co-operative Societies; but I have no Returns on the subject which I could present to the House. I may point out that, under the Companies Act, every Limited Liability Company is bound to have a list of shareholders accessible to individual members of the public who may desire to consult it.

MR. HOOPER: In consequence of the answer of the right hon. Gentleman, I wish to ask a Question which is expunged from the Question which appeared on the Paper, which I humbly consider I am entitled to put. I wish to ask——

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member is not entitled to put that Question.

MR. SCLATER-BOOTH (Hants, Basingstoke) inquired whether the right hon. Gentleman had received remonstrances from the traders of Aldershot complaining of officers being shareholders in the Army and Navy Co-operative Stores, and having exclusive dealings with the stores as against the traders in the town; and, whether a Return would not be procured showing the names of the officers who were at that particular period at Aldershot, and who were shareholders in the Army and Navy Stores?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: That is a statement referring to a cognate case, but not the same case. I believe it is true that in a private conversation my right hon. Predecessor did give what information he could obtain as to the names of certain officers who were shareholders; but it was not the kind of information which can be furnished as a Return to this House, because we have no special means of obtaining it, and it is information which is open to any member of the public who chooses to inquire. With regard to the definite Question put by the right hon. Gentleman, I may say that such a Memorial as he speaks of has been received, and no doubt the whole question of the canteen arrangements and their dealing with stores is a fit matter for debate; but I can hardly be expected, in answer to a Question, to give an opinion on the subject.

MR. HOOPER: Arising out of the answer of the right hon. Gentleman, I should like to know whether it may not become the duty of Army officers to sit in judgment on complaints as to the quality of goods supplied by Associations such as these in which they themselves may be shareholders?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I take it that it would be very improper if they did so; but I am not aware that it is the case.

MR. HOOPER: But will the right hon. Gentleman inquire whether it is the case?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: That is the very thing I cannot do. I can inquire which officers have sat on the complaints; but I can have no definite official knowledge whether these officers are or are not shareholders in the Co-operative Societies which supplied the goods complained of. Judging from my general knowledge of the subject, which is not very deep, I believe the pecuniary interest of any individual officer in any of these Societies is extremely limited.

MR. HOOPER: In consequence of the highly unsatisfactory replies of the right hon. Gentleman, I beg to give Notice that on going into Committee of Supply I will call attention to the alleged coercion of committees of garrison canteens by officers to deal with Co-operative Societies.

INLAND REVENUE—INCOME TAX COLLECTORS.

MR. COX (Clare, E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether it is true that, if, after repeated applications on the part of local collectors of Income Tax for payment, the tax is remitted direct to the Comptroller, the poundage is not paid to the local collector, although he had all the trouble; and, whether he will order that the poundage be paid in all cases where every effort had been made by the local collector to secure payment?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): Poundage is payable only to collectors on the sums recoverable by them. No alteration in the present system is necessary or advisable.

MR. COX (Clare, E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether it is true that local collectors of Income Tax in Ireland outside the city of Dublin have to pay postage on all Correspondence relating to the collection of Income Tax; whether the local collectors within the city of Dublin are saved this considerable expenditure by sending their letters through the free official post; and, whether he will see that the former be placed on the same footing as the latter by ordering that their official letters be sent free through the post?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The poundage covers all expenses incidental to the performance of the duties of the office. The privilege referred to in the second part of the Question is taken into account in fixing the remuneration of the collectors. There is no necessity for altering the present system. In Dublin the collection is made from house to house; in the country the tax is, as a rule, collected from the landlords or agents with much less trouble and expense.

PUBLIC HEALTH—REMOVAL OF SMALL-POX PRISONERS.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is true that, under the instructions of the Secretary of State for the Home Department, two prisoners suffering from smallpox in its acutest stage were removed from Shrewsbury Gaol to the Atcham Workhouse, a distance of five miles, the one on the 7th March, the other on the 26th April; whether, in consequcence of the virulence of the disease, no officer of the prison was sent in charge of the prisoner, David Lewis, to the workhouse; whether the inevitable exposure of the prisoner during the journey endangered his life; whether the sentence of David Lewis was unexpired, and was commuted by the Home Secretary for the purpose of endeavouring to give technical legality to the removal; and, whether he will inform the House of the date on which the notice of the commutation of sentence was received by the governor of the gaol, and the specific reasons for such commutation?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.): Yes, Sir; it is true that these two prisoners were removed suffering from small-pox, but not in its acutest stage. On the contrary, they were in a condition in which they might properly be removed. The prisoner Lewis was removed in charge of the Sanitary Inspector, who was specially asked by the medical officer to undertake this duty because of his exceptional experience, such as a warder could not possess, and not in consequence of the virulence of the disease. The prisoner was removed in a covered conveyance. The patient is now going on satisfactorily, and there is no reason to think that his health was in any way affected by the mode of removal. In accordance with the usual practice, having received a certificate that the prisoner's removal was desirable on medical grounds, I advised the remission of the remainder of his sentence—namely, two months of a 12 months' sentence. The instructions for the removal reached the prison on Monday, the 26th. The usual Order of the Home Office was received on the following day. I have no reason to doubt that the removal was, under the circumstances, expedient, and that all proper care was taken in the case. I may add that the prison is at present undergoing partial reconstruction, and there is no available space for the insulation of a case of this nature; and, moreover, I understand that the workhouse infirmary at Atcham is used for infectious cases, including small-pox cases.

In reply to a further Question,

Mr. CHILDERS said, it would partly depend on the condition of the prison whether, if a prisoner was affected with disease of this kind, he should be removed. In the present case, it would clearly have been wrong to keep him in prison.

NAVY—CONTRACTS FOR CRUISERS WITH PRIVATE BUILDERS.

Mr. JACKS (Leith, &c.) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, If it be true that the Government, whilst taking tenders for the building of cruisers lately from various builders, made an exception in favour of a Belfast shipyard, and ordered two vessels, without previously having contracted what the price had to be; and, if it be true, and it be not against the public weal, would he explain to the House the reason for that course?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Hibbert) (Oldham): It is a fact that the Admiralty, in August last, ordered two gunboats from Messrs. Harland and Wolffe under the circumstances stated in the Question of the hon. Member. The reason for this course was an experiment to test the value of the system of paying the actual cost of wages, material, and other direct expenses, with a due proportion of the fixed and trade expenses of the concern, and a commission of 5 per cent on the whole as the sole remuneration and profit of the transaction. Though the latter terms, which were agreed to by the late Government, are unusual, I am informed that Messrs. Harland and Wolffe have built ships and engines for several important shipping firms and Companies in Liverpool and elsewhere to the value of over £2,500,000 sterling upon this system.

THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—CONSTABLE HAYES.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL (Fermanagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord

Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Constable Hayes was stationed at Arney, county Fermanagh, on the 16th of August 1885; whether, on the evening of that day, he went to a friend's house, being then off duty; whether he remained at this house until half-past nine, and left at that time, reaching his barrack at a quarter to ten; if, on arriving at his barrack, he found the door closed against him, although his leave of absence extended to ten o'clock; whether he was reported by Sergeant Clinton; fined in the sum of 7*s.* 6*d.* by the county inspector; and, at his own expense, transferred to Lisnaskea; whether Constable Hayes demanded an inquiry, which was refused; was he within his right in asking for this inquiry; and, whether it will be granted? Also, Whether a constable named Tuohy was transferred from Arney, county Fermanagh, at his own expense, to another station, because he refused to sign a false statement at the request of Sergeant Clinton as to the number of hours he was out on patrol duty?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, that on the evening in question the constable was absent without leave from half-past 7 o'clock to a quarter past 10 o'clock. He was charged with this, but denied it. The County Inspector, however, having investigated the circumstances, considered him guilty, and fined him 7*s.* 6*d.* He did not appeal for an inquiry, and he was transferred, not at his own, but at the public charge. In answer to the second Question of the hon. Member, Constable Tuohy was transferred to another station at his own request for having preferred a charge against a sergeant, which on investigation proved to be frivolous and vindictive. He had endeavoured to represent that an obvious clerical error was a wilful and deliberate false entry, and the course taken, under the circumstances, was considered perfectly justifiable; and in neither case was an inquiry called for.

EGYPT—THE MILITARY EXPEDITION —THE BATTLE OF GINNIS.

VISCOUNT NEWARK (Notts, Newark) asked the Secretary of State for War, Why no medal or clasp has been given for the Battle of Ginnis, one of the most decisive actions fought in Egypt, and attended with most important results?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): Her Majesty's Government fully recognize the important results of the battle of Ginnis, and also the high qualities displayed both by officers and men who were engaged in it. In granting medals or clasps, however, it is essential to have regard in some degree to the severity of the fighting. In the battle of Ginnis the casualties only amounted to nine killed and 26 wounded, including the Egyptian Forces. Under these circumstances, Her Majesty's Government think that it will be sufficient to award the Egyptian medal to all the troops employed. This is the same medal as was given to all troops employed up the Nile.

INLAND NAVIGATION AND DRAINAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIVER SHANNON.

MR. W. ABRAHAM (Limerick, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the fishermen on the Shannon above the Great Lax weir, at Limerick, allege that certain structural changes have been made in the weir, and particularly in the Queen's Gap, by the Shannon Fishing Company, whereby free passage of fish is prevented, and the means of living of a number of fishermen seriously affected; and, if he will direct the Fishery Inspectors to hold an inquiry into this matter with the least possible delay?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The allegation mentioned in this Question was the subject of judicial investigation before the magistrates at Limerick, and a fine was imposed on the owner of the weir; but the decision was reversed on appeal. The Inspectors of Fisheries inform me that, according to the decision of the Court in the case of "The Duke of Devonshire *v.* Foot," they have no jurisdiction in such matters, and could not, therefore, hold an inquiry with any advantage. That decision was to the effect that no order which the Inspectors might make could deprive magistrates of the power of hearing and determining complaints of this nature.

In reply to Mr. Cox (Clare, E.),

MR. JOHN MORLEY said, as this was a matter which had been dealt with by the Land Courts, he doubted whether any advantage would accrue from a Government inquiry; but he would make further inquiries on the subject.

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL—THE CIVIL SERVICE.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he can inform the House what is the annual amount of the salaries in the Civil Service which, under the provisions of the Government of Ireland Bill, will be placed at the disposal of the Irish Government?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle - on - Tyne): This Question is down without Notice. I can only say that if the hon. Gentleman will refer to the Estimates he will, I am sure, be able, with very little trouble, to extract the information he requires. But if he wishes to have it on official authority, his best course would be either to address the Question to a Representative of the Treasury, or to call for it by way of a Return.

IRELAND—ARKLOW HARBOUR WORKS—THE BREAKWATER.

Mr. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether he is aware that one of his predecessors in office, in reply to a Question on 26th February 1885, as to the damage to the Arklow Breakwater, stated—

> "The recent storms have caused a slight subsidence, which is of no structural importance, and has been remedied at a trifling cost;"

whether, after many ineffectual attempts on the part of the Harbour Committee, representing the ratepayers, who have guaranteed repayment of the loan of twenty thousand pounds, to get an inquiry, the Engineer of the Board of Works, who designed the Breakwater, reported, 20th April 1885, that the sand foundations had been scoured out by the sea, which scouring out extended under the storm wall for its entire width of nineteen and a half feet; whether his attention has been called to a paper just laid upon the Table, from which it appears an additional sum of ten thousand five hundred pounds will be required to carry out the recommendations of Messrs. Stevenson and Stoney, which sum it is proposed to charge upon the rates; whether he is aware that the ship and boat owners from the first condemned the plans of the Board of Works; and, whether the ratepayers will be called on for a fresh guarantee under all the circumstances of the case?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): The statements in the first two paragraphs of the Question are substantially correct. Before the extra expense, £10,500, involved in Messrs. Stevenson and Stoney's recommendation is incurred, the consent of the Town Commissioners to that amount being charged on the town rates would have to be obtained. With regard to paragraph 4, I am informed that the ship and boat owners of Arklow, though at first objecting to the design of the Board of Works' engineer, have from time to time disagreed among themselves. They, however, appear to be now in favour of the execution of the works in accordance with the original design, with slight modifications, with one exception—namely, the Northern groins. No decision has yet been come to as to Messrs. Stevenson and Stoney's plan. If the additional expenditure of £10,500 is incurred, it would have to be guaranteed in the same manner as the £20,000.

Mr. W. J. CORBET asked, would there be any objection to lay the Papers on the Table of the House in reference to this case?

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: I will consider that point.

EGYPT—BRITISH TROOPS IN EGYPT—SANITARY CONDITION.

Mr. COOPE (Middlesex, Brentford) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he is aware that a British Regiment has been detained on duty up the Nile for two successive summers; and, whether, considering the unhealthiness of the climate, that Regiment will be relieved, and orders given that any Regiment so stationed will be relieved annually?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) (Stirling, &c.): Up to this time the position of the battalions on the Nile has necessarily been determined according to the exigencies of military duty by the General Officer commanding in Egypt, who is best able to decide as to the state of health and fitness of the regiments under his command. With the present reduction of the Force the battalions longest in Egypt are being withdrawn; and I have no doubt that Sir Frederick Stephenson will make the best arrangements open to him for the relief, in due course, of any which may be in unhealthy positions.

INLAND REVENUE — SALARIES OF FIRST-CLASS ASSISTANTS.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to a Letter from Mr. Adam Young, one of the Secretaries to the Board of Inland Revenue, addressed to the Civil Service Inquiry Commission, 1875, and published in the Appendix to their Third Report (page 66), which states that a slight addition to the salary of First-class Assistants had become necessary, and that that the average time in reaching that rank was two years, Whether there is at present any officer holding that rank with under four and a-half years' service; and, whether any addition, such as was stated to be necessary in 1875, has since been made to the salaries of these officers, whose number has increased from 227 in 1875 to 316 in 1886?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby): The answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative, and to the second part of the Question in the negative.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury a Question with regard to the further progress of the debate on the Government of Ireland Bill. Sir, last night the right hon. Gentleman referred to some precedents which I had quoted for the continuance of similar debates *de die in diem;* and he then said if I was right in my reference to the precedent of the Reform Bill of 1866, he would give way at once on that question. Well, Sir, I was not right as to that precedent. As my noble Friend the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) reminded us, that debate was not continued *de die in diem* from its commencement, but an interval of one day, which was a private Members' day (Tuesday), was allowed to elapse. Subsequently the debate was resumed on the Thursday, and was then continued *de die in diem* until its termination. That precedent, therefore, being in exact accordance with the present position of the debate, I would now ask the right hon. Gentleman, Whether, looking to the importance of the debate, the great interest in it over all other Business, and the necessity for many reasons of bringing it to as early a conclusion as is compatible with its proper conduct, he will not propose that it should be continued on Friday and subsequently till it is concluded?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I said on the previous occasion that I would not enter into precedents, and that it would be a false position in which I should place myself if, as mainly responsible for the conduct of the Business of the House, I were to set up a controversial tone against the right hon. Gentleman in favour of delaying the progress of Public Business. I stated that when we could forecast the probable course of the debate, and the number of Members who were likely to address the House, we would then, if we saw occasion, ask the House to give us what is called its whole time I will, however, consult my Colleagues before Thursday, and then will announce what course we intend to propose that the House should pursue on Friday and all subsequent days. I am bound to be a little reserved upon this question, because I think that it is perfectly possible that the demands of the Government for an unusual appropriation of the time of the House might extend to other stages of the Bill besides the second reading.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I omitted, Sir, to state in asking the Question that having communicated with my hon. Friend the Member for Stockport (Mr. Jennings), who had given Notice of a Motion which is first on the Paper for Friday, he has authorized me to say that, in the circumstances, he would willingly waive his right to that evening.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) asked the Prime Minister, Whether, before assenting to the right hon. Gentleman's request, he would consult with other hon. Gentlemen who, like the hon. Member for Stockport, had Notices on the Paper for Friday, and ascertain whether they also would be willing to give way?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Yes, Sir; I will examine the list of private Members' Motions between this and Thursday, so that we can know what can be done.

MOTIONS.

——o——

DEATH PENALTY.—RESOLUTION.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle), in rising to call attention to the law and practice relating to capital punishment, and to move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived for the abolition of the death penalty for the crime of murder,"

said, that there had been during the last few years several Motions on this important question. He had hesitated whether to make his Motion in the form in which it appeared, or to adopt a more qualified one in favour of the view which had been expressed by the Royal Commission that the crime of murder should be divided into two classes, for one of which death, and for the other penal servitude, should be inflicted. After consideration, he had come to the conclusion, as he believed the time had arrived when the death penalty should be altogether abolished, that it was better to advocate that course. Two right hon. Gentlemen below him in times past (Mr. Childers and Sir William Harcourt) had expressed their views in the sense of his Motion, though he did not know whether the responsibilities of Office would allow them to do so on the present occasion. It was now 20 years ago since the Royal Commission had examined the whole question. Five of its Members were in favour of total abolition. Of these, Lord O'Hagan made a separate Report, in which, while expressing his view that capital punishment should be abolished, he said that the abolition ought only to take place after the lapse of a certain time. No doubt, it was necessary to have the death penalty in savage societies; but as civilization and Christianity advanced that necessity diminished, and the time had now come when, with safety to the State, milder measures might be resorted to. The question for the House to consider was, could they repress crime by sparing the lives of those whom we now hanged, and would our lives be quite as safe if their lives were spared and other punishments were awarded them? Our Criminal Code, as he had stated before in that House, used to be one of the most severe and barbarous that ever existed in a civilized country. Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton had stated that in the Reign of Henry VIII., 72,000 robbers were hung; and that between 1749 and 1771, 109,000 suffered the same penalty. The Tudors, the Stuarts, and the House of Brunswick successively increased the number of offences for which death was inflicted. Up to the beginning of this century shoplifting and other minor offences was punished by hanging. But those offences were not found to increase—they diminished in number—when the punishment was mitigated. In the same way it might reasonably be expected that, with the abolition of capital punishment, murders would not increase. A very useful Paper in regard to this matter had been drawn up for the information of the House as to the figures and effects of the abolition of capital punishment in foreign countries somewhat similar to our own. In Belgium there had been no execution since 1873, and there had been no increase, but a positive decrease, in the capital offences. There were other countries—he would not go through the long list of them—but in the Netherlands and in Holland the same thing had occurred, and the capital crime had gone on decreasing instead of increasing. He was asked, "What with regard to Switzerland?" The Swiss found that they had to go back to their old law and re-instate capital punishment as a matter of law; and each federated Canton could resume the death penalty, but only some had done so; but he believed no execution had taken place. Yes; but Switzerland was a very peculiar country. It was one of the most drunken countries in the world, and a large amount of the crime that was committed there arose from drink. In Rhode Island, and one or two other of the United States, the abolition of capital punishment had not hitherto tended to an increase of crime; and it was a fact that, wherever it had been tried in

America, no State had gone back upon the course it had adopted. With regard to the fact as to its being a deterrent upon our own criminal population, he had his doubts upon the matter. He believed it would be found that long terms of imprisonment were a much greater deterrent. There was a case some time ago in the county of Durham in which a man of the name of Fury gave himself up out of penal servitude, and confessed to the murder of a woman in Sunderland, in order that he might be hanged, and so get rid of a lifelong servitude in gaol. Another point to which he wished to call the attention of the House was that the number of our executions had been gradually diminishing during recent years. In the six years from 1872 to 1878 there was an average of 24 executions per annum; while from 1878 to 1884, the next six years, the number was only an annual average of 14. It seemed to him that, considering the increase in the population, the House could draw a strong inference from this, to the effect that human life had been just as safe during the last six years, when there were fewer executions, as it was during the first six years, when the executions were 24 a-year. He believed that hanging murderers would never teach a community the sacredness of human life; and he would like to ask whether they could safely trust to a fallible tribunal to inflict a penalty which could not be recalled? The Judge might err, the jury might err, or the evidence might err. There could be no doubt that there were a great many innocent persons who had been sentenced to death; and it was a remarkable circumstance during the last few years how many persons had been rescued from gaol for crimes of a very grave character of which they were innocent. He could give a very long list of them, but he would not trouble the House with it. He might add, however, that Sir Fitzroy Kelly had stated that he had made out to his own satisfaction cases where 22 were sentenced to death who were innocent, and seven of these were executed. There was one case which he (Sir Joseph Pease) should specially like to mention. It was the case in which three men were tried at Durham not very long since for the murder of a policeman under very aggravating circumstances. One of those three men owed his life to the present Chancellor of Exchequer, who sent down specially from the Home Office, and made inquiries which resulted in the man's life being saved. In that case it was notorious that the more guilty man was acquitted, and a man who was innocent of the actual murder, though accessory, was hung. Since executions had been carried out inside prisons reporters were sometimes admitted and sometimes not. We heard sometimes of a short drop and sometimes of a long one. Occasionally we heard of an amateur executioner, or a Baronet assisting at an execution. These things ought to be put a stop to if executions were continued; but the best way of stopping them was to stop the executions. There were many horrible incidents attendant upon executions. There was a case to which he would briefly refer. It was that of a poor woman named Cotton, a notorious murderess, who was confined in Durham gaol. That poor woman was kept in gaol from August, 1872, till the spring of 1873, because she was not fit to be tried owing to the fact that she was near her confinement. She was tried in March, 1873, and executed March 19. She was kept through all the pains of maternity in order that she should be hung six months after the crime which she committed in 1872. That was one of those things which he thought led the people rather to sympathize with the criminal than to vindicate the law by the present barbarous mode of punishment by hanging. If that woman, instead of being hanged, had been imprisoned for life, it would have produced a more salutary effect, and afforded greater warning to criminals of that class. There had been cases in which ropes had broken, and half-strangled men had fallen to the ground, and had been kept in agony and suspense until other ropes were adjusted. At Liverpool once the executioner was so obviously under the influence of drink as to provoke a solemn reproof from the chaplain. Recently the weight of the convict and the length of the drop resulted in decapitation. He thought he had shown that in those countries in which capital punishment had been abolished there had been no increase in crimes of murder. In Belgium, Spain, Holland, and other States, the death penalty had been abolished with safety to the community. Why, then, should we not adopt a more humane plan than the one now in force? There was another point, however, which he should like to bring to the attention of the House, and that was the extreme youth of those who suffered the death penalty. In 1880 there were 13 persons executed. Of those four were under 21, 23, 22, and 24 years of age. In 1881 11 persons were hanged. Of these five were under 24, 22, 20, and 21 years of age, In 1882 12 persons were hanged. Of these one was only 17 years old; another only 19; and a third only 22. In 1883 13 were hanged, and of these persons one was under 24; one under 23; one under 22; and one under 21 years of age. In 1884 there were 15 executions. Out of these four persons were respectively 18, 25, 21, and 23 years of age. One-third of all those criminals were mere boys, and they were hanged for crimes committed in passion. It was a fact that jealousy came in very much as the cause of the execution of these young people. It was well known to the prison authorities that the "street sneak," as he was described, was the worst criminal of any class, and gave the most trouble. In 1885, out of 21 persons who were hanged, not more than eight were more than 25 years of age. Then, again, there was the very interesting inquiry as to how far insanity had to do with murder. It was established by medical reports that 10 per cent of our convicted murderers were found to be insane, and therefore unfit to be hanged; whilst only one in 1,000 of other convicts were found insane. A letter he had received from a lady connected with the New York Penitentiary stated that one of her best helpers was a woman who had been convicted of a murder committed in jealousy. As regarded the treatment of criminals, he thought the evidence which had been collected in America, Belgium, Holland, &c. was very strong, and proved very clearly the efficacy of humane methods and the abandonment of barbarous customs. He had himself received communications from those in charge of these criminal establishments, showing that in many cases the criminals, when brought under higher influences than those to which they had previously been subjected, grew tractable and good. That showed what might be done if we adopted a more humane mode of treatment of our prisoners. The better classification, order, and regularity that were being brought about in our prisons under the Act of the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir R. Assheton Cross) were far more conducive to preparation for the life hereafter than the death sentence and confinement in the condemned cell. If a convict were a calculator of chances—and he (Sir Joseph Pease) had the authority of Parliamentary Returns for what he was about to state—he might speculate upon the possibility of escaping execution from 20 years' averages. The chances were, if he was convicted, four to one that he was not hung; but if he was a burglar, the chances of being sentenced were three to one against him. With regard to the Amendment of his hon. Friend opposite (Mr. Howard Vincent), he (Sir Joseph Pease) thought there was a good deal to be said in favour of it, if the House did not feel disposed to accept the Motion which he submitted. He believed that some such recommendation as that suggested in the Amendment ought to have been carried out long ago. Certainly the time had come when they ought to endeavour to treat condemned persons as human beings, for he was convinced that the worst thing which could be done to them was to hang them. In all these cases the Home Secretary had a duty which he was sure no one would envy. It was his duty to weigh all the circumstances of the case, with a view of finding whether he could recommend the exercise of the prerogative of mercy. He was not at all afraid of the action of the Home Secretary; but he was sure it was not the wish of the Gentlemen filling that Office to have this duty placed on their shoulders. It ought to be the duty of the jury to say whether the execution should take place or not. Instead of a prerogative of mercy there ought to be a prerogative of law; and the former, if used at all, should only be brought in in extraordinary cases, when the Home Secretary might feel that he ought to exercise the power which Her Majesty had placed in his hands. He might be asked if he had looked at those cases which had occurred in the Sister Island? He had. He would first refer to the murder of Sergeant Brett at Manchester. Three men were hanged for the murder of Sergeant Brett. He believed that not one of those men had intended to murder that officer. They intended to blow the lock off the prison van which contained the prisoner whom they desired to rescue. No doubt they were doing an unlawful act, and were in the eye of the law guilty of murder, as death ensued, and accordingly they were hanged. He believed if those men had been placed in penal servitude no spirit of vengeance would have been aroused in the mind of the Irish people; and he believed that those men would, when in course of time sufficiently punished for their crime, have been restored to liberty. Then they had the Maamtrasna case, with respect to which a large number of the Irish people did not believe in the guilt of the men hanged. He believed if those men had been sentenced to penal servitude for life the effect would have been far more satisfactory. By this means, too, if it were found that a prisoner was not guilty of the crime with which he was charged, he could be restored to life and liberty. Again, there were the Phœnix Park murders, one of the most atrocious crimes of modern days. He believed that the murderers in this case had thrown back the cause which he advocated many years. He thought that the effect of those criminals being detained in lifelong imprisonment as a punishment for their crime would have had a much more deterrent effect on others, and would have been just as effective in its eventual operation. He was of opinion that the time had come when they could safely alter their Criminal Code in this respect. It was not necessary to stop at the half-way house suggested by the hon. Member opposite, because they might with safety to the State and to human life abolish a law which began in barbarity, and which in its operations bore too evident traces of its origin. In successive generations our Criminal Law had been improved and ameliorated step by step. It was a better law than it was when, with half our population, we hanged 2,000 of our fellow-citizens every year. He asked the House to take another step in advance, and, by adopting his Resolution, pave the way for such an alteration in the Criminal Code as would abolish the ghastly punishment of the gallows. The hon. Baronet concluded by moving the Motion which stood in his name.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived for the abolition of the death penalty for the crime of murder."—(*Sir Joseph Pease.*)

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central), in rising to move the following Amendment:—

"To leave out from the word 'House' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'it is desirable that offences for which the penalty of death now follows a verdict of guilty, unless remitted by Her Majesty, should be divided into three categories, as recommended by a Royal Commission in 1866, and in order that executions, when necessary, may be carried out with every regard to humanity and decency, an experienced person should be selected by the Government for the purpose, and adequately remunerated from public funds,'"

said: Mr. Speaker, I have the deepest respect for the motives of my hon. Friend in submitting this important matter to the notice of the House of Commons, and I greatly regret that I am compelled to take an opposite view upon this question. It is, I feel, a serious responsibility to advocate in Parliament the continuance of a system which may deprive a fellow-creature of life; but the well-being of society requires that the fear of death shall restrain the violence of human hatred. It has been so ordained in Scripture. It has been found necessary in well-nigh every State, in every generation. It is, I have no doubt, in a large measure owing to the calm temperament of the British people that murder and assassination are so much less frequent in this country than in many others. But it is also owing to the certain knowledge that if life is maliciously taken the penalty will be death, that culpable homicide in this great Metropolis, embracing thousands of every race in the world, is only from one-eighth to one-twelfth what it is in many great Continental cities with considerably less than half the population. Capital punishment was abolished in Switzerland in 1874; but there was such an immediate increase in the crime of murder in many places that it was quite clear that some urgent steps must be taken for the safety of the people. On the 18th of May, 1879, a Commission appointed to consider the re-establishing of capital punishment, in accordance with the prayer of 30,000 Swiss subjects, declared that the number of crimes formerly punishable by death had greatly increased during the preceding five years, and that this increase had been still greater in Germany. In fact, the augmentations since 1862 had been 100 per cent, and in Wurtemburg, where the death penalty had been abolished, not less than 200 per cent. The Federal Chambers thereupon re-instituted capital punishment, and their decision was approved and confirmed by the people on an appeal to the wide electorate of that happy country. Eight Cantons forthwith re-introduced capital punishment; and although it is true that no execution has taken place, it is retained as the great deterrent against the crime of murder. It is for these reasons that I venture to dissent from the Motion of the hon. Baronet, aiming as it does at the total abolition of capital punishment. The first part of my Amendment is to leave out the words after "House," and insert—

> "It is desirable that offences for which the penalty of death now follows a verdict of guilty, unless remitted by Her Majesty, shall be divided into three categories, as recommended by a Royal Commission in 1866."

The recommendations of the Royal Commission to which I refer in my Amendment are these — (1.) That the punishment of death be retained for all murders deliberately committed with express malice aforethought, such malice to be found as a fact by the jury. (2.) That the punishment of death be also retained for all murders committed in or with a view to the perpetration, or escape after the perpetration, of murder, arson, rape, burglary, robbery, or piracy. (3.) That in all other cases of murder the punishment be penal servitude for life, or for any period not less than seven years at the discretion of the Court. The result of the present state of affairs is far from satisfactory. There is no question, Mr. Speaker, I was more frequently asked during the six and a-half years I held the Office of Director of Criminal Investigations than whether a householder was justified in shooting a burglar; and I always said that, in my humble opinion, it would be the most honourable avenue to the gallows. Our law, if I may take it from the Report of the Royal Commission of 1866, and which was composed of the most eminent legal authorities of that day, is as follows:—

> "No provocation by words, looks, or gestures, however contemptuous and insulting, nor by any trespass against lands or goods, is sufficient to free the party killing from the guilt of murder, if he kills with a deadly weapon, or in any manner showing an intention to kill, or do grievous bodily harm. Therefore, if a man in a sudden fit of passion, aroused by insult to himself or his wife, kills the person who offers the insult, he is by law liable to the same punishment as the assassin who has long premeditated and brooded over his crime."

From this unsatisfactory state of affairs we have, Mr. Speaker, not only the risk of unjustly sentencing to death, but not unfrequently a miscarriage of justice. Juries directed as to the state of the law, and having, as a rule, only circumstantial evidence before them, naturally hesitate to find a verdict the result of which would be, in all probability, to condemn a fellow-creature to an ignoble death, against which, under all the circumstances, both reason and common sense alike revolt. I therefore submit the first part of my Motion to the earnest attention of the House, and respectfully urge its adoption, even after this unaccountable delay of 20 years of the Home Department. The second part of my Amendment is—

> "That executions, when necessary, may be carried out with every regard to humanity and decency. An experienced person should be selected by the Government for the purpose, and adequately remunerated from public funds."

The terrible scenes which, even allowing for some exaggeration, have in late years taken place at more than one execution will be within the recollection of the House. They are well described in a Petition presented by the hon. Baronet himself on behalf of the inhabitants of the City of Norwich. It states—

> "That the community has been outraged by the recent scenes which have been enacted in carrying out the capital sentence of the law, decapitation resulting in some instances; in others the death struggles have been unduly prolonged."

I consider, Mr. Speaker, that infinite good has been effected by the abolition of public executions. But I hold it to be a gross scandal that the selection of the person to discharge the painful duty of carrying out the extreme penalty of the law—an office requiring, believe me, Sir, no little courage and experience—should be left to the accidental choice of the Sheriff. It is disgraceful that the remuneration of any person—nay, more, his humble livelihood—should be dependent upon the number of murders committed, the non-remission of the sentence of death, the number of human beings he can launch into eternity, and, still worse, that it should be a matter of bargaining whether he will take a double or a treble job on reduced terms. It is imperative that so long as the penalty of death remains for the crime of murder the law of the land, the Home Secretary should take Parliamentary powers to appoint a proper person as executioner, place him under proper discipline, and remunerate him adequately out of the public funds for his odious though necessary task. I therefore, Sir, beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name to the Motion of the hon. Baronet opposite the Member for Barnard Castle.

Mr. LOCKWOOD (York), in rising to second the Amendment of the hon. Member for Sheffield (Mr. H. Vincent), said, he had listened with great attention to the arguments in support of the Motion which had been brought before the House by the hon. Baronet (Sir Joseph Pease); and he must say that he could not help wishing that the Motion had been the same as that which had been brought before the House by the hon. Baronet on a previous occasion, because his recollection was that the Motion which he had heard on a previous occasion differed very little indeed from the Amendment which had just been moved by his hon. Friend opposite. The hon. Baronet had, however, on the present occasion dealt with the question in a wide and more sweeping manner, and had asked the House to pass an abstract Resolution of very grave import; and he had, undoubtedly, a great advantage in his favour in so far as the principles which he advocated were very difficult to resist. The hon. Baronet said the punishment of death was a barbaric mode of treating criminals; but he (Mr. Lockwood) respectfully submitted that the question was not whether the punishment was barbaric, but whether or not it was deterrent, and he contended that it was deterrent. Other punishments were also barbaric—for instance, the punishment of flogging; but, unfortunately, it had been found to be a necessary mode of treating them, and the records of the Criminal Courts showed that it had been attended with extremely beneficial results in reducing the frequency and the brutality of the crimes for which it was inflicted. He could speak upon this point from experience in his professional capacity. The hon. Baronet had adduced certain instances which he contended justified him in asking the House to come to the conclusion that the dread sentence of death had on many occasions been carried out upon innocent persons. That was a terrible thing to contemplate; but it appeared to him (Mr. Lockwood) that the House would not be justified in coming to such a conclusion upon the evidence adduced, and upon which the hon. Baronet relied. With regard to the convict Charles Peace, he (Mr. Lockwood) remembered very well the attempts made by the convict to postpone the carrying out of the sentence, one of which was the confession that he was connected with a murder at Manchester. He (Mr. Lockwood) was consulted in the matter, and the result of his inquiries was that he did not believe that Peace had anything whatever to do with the murder. The hon. Baronet had also mentioned a case in which three men were charged with murder. The hon. Baronet said one was found guilty who was not guilty, and the one who was found not guilty was really guilty. He (Mr. Lockwood) was astonished to hear the hon. Baronet make such a statement respecting a man who had been acquitted by a jury. The other prisoners were convicted, the one, he (Mr. Lockwood) ventured to think, properly, and the other improperly. The case was brought to the notice of the Home Secretary, who instituted an inquiry; but, so far from that being a proof which should convince the House that the death penalty should be done away with, it was, to his mind, an instance which showed that the law was administered with great care and with sufficient caution. In one case, so careful was the Home Secretary in the administration of the law, that the person was respited from time to time whilst a Commission was sent out to America to make inquiries, and the prisoner was ultimately executed. Then, as to the doctrine of chances, the hon. Baronet said that, taking the number of persons accused of murder, the chances against the conviction of a prisoner were four to one, which he considered to be a proof of the public feeling against the death penalty. But it was really owing to the system under which persons were over and over again indicted for murder, where no man in his senses would allow them to go to the gallows. Why, if a man went out to shoot a duck, and in the act of shooting the duck he killed a man, he was indicted for murder. It was certainly four to one that such a prisoner would be acquitted of the crime of wilful murder; and he (Mr. Lockwood) thought the chances ought to be a good deal more than four to one. But while the chances against conviction pointed out by the hon. Baronet did not prove that the penalty of death should be done away with, they certainly formed a strong argument in favour of the Amendment of his hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, that there should be degrees in the crime of murder; and, that being so, he hoped that the hon. Baronet would accept the Amendment cordially. The Report of the Commission, to which the hon. Member for Sheffield had referred, recommended that before life should be forfeited for the crime of murder it should be proved that the crime had been committed with malice aforethought; and he (Mr. Lockwood) submitted that the law should be altered in accordance with that recommendation, so that before a man could be convicted of murder in the first degree, the *onus* should rest upon the prosecution to prove that the crime was committed with malice aforethought. In favour of this view they had the opinion of men of great eminence and experience, such as Lord Bramwell, Lord Martin, Mr. Justice Wills, and Mr. Justice Stephen. On the other hand, they had the opinion of men of great authority and experience to the effect that the death punishment acted as a very effective deterrent to crime; and it was with that view and in that spirit that he (Mr. Lockwood) seconded the Amendment of the hon. Member for Sheffield, in the sincere hope that the debate might, at least, have the effect of drawing the attention of the Legislature to the crying evils which existed.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "House" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "it is desirable that offences, for which the penalty of death now follows a verdict of guilty, unless remitted by Her Majesty, should be divided into three categories, as recommended by a Royal Commission in 1866; and in order that executions, when necessary, may be carried out with every regard to humanity and decency, an experienced person should be selected by the Government for the purpose, and adequately remunerated from public funds,"—(*Mr. Howard Vincent,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby) said, that his right hon. Friend the Home Secretary had asked him to say a few words upon this subject, because it had been his painful duty for more than five years to have to consider this subject with very great care. He might say that he had not approached the consideration of this matter in any spirit of hostility to the view taken of it by the hon. Baronet behind him—in fact, in former days he had recorded his vote in that House in favour of the abolition of the punishment of death. He had, however, stated before—and it was his duty to repeat the statement—that he did not adhere to his former opinion. In changing his view of the matter he had not arrived at the conclusion that the punishment of death ought to be largely and extensively applied. He believed that in former days that punishment had been applied in a brutal, a cruel, and in an unnecessary manner. No doubt in succeeding years the tendency of opinion—he was not speaking of uninstructed popular opinion, but of the opinion of thinking men—was in favour of diminishing the number of cases in which the gravest penalty of the law was inflicted; and that diminution had been effected, he believed, with absolute safety to society, and with great advantage to the community, and he did not shrink from expressing his opinion now that the number of cases in which the penalty of death was inflicted might with advantage be still further reduced. The character of the cases in which the prerogative of mercy might with advantage be exercised more frequently he would divide under two heads, one of them being provocation and the other insanity. In regard to provocation as a ground for remission of penalty, that principle was much more widely accepted now than it had ever been before, and, he believed, rightly so. Then, he thought that the fact of a man not being completely master of his actions, through his mind being disturbed, it might be, by some hereditary taint of insanity, was a matter that ought to be taken into account. Neither he nor his immediate Predecessors in Office had thought that they were bound by the strict legal interpretation of insanity as laid down by the Judges in the House of Lords, which he had always thought was much too narrow; and he believed that a much more liberal interpretation had been adopted in all cases where the prerogative of mercy was to be exercised. He desired to take that opportunity of saying that he very strongly held that the severity of all punishments might be relaxed with safety and with advantage. When he was at the Home Office he had remarked upon the very marked and very satisfactory diminution of crime in this country during recent years; and his view of the matter had met with the approval of Lord Selborne, and of Sir Edmund Du Cane, the experienced head of our convict prisons, who both agreed with him that penalties of far less severity, and of greatly diminished length, would have an equally deterrent effect, and might be resorted to with perfect safety. Referring to the question put in issue by his hon. Friend, he thought there were cases in which it was impossible, in the present state of opinion in this country, that they could dispense safely with the punishment of death. He would not refer to matters which involved other considerations, like Irish murders, but would notice only two cases which took place during his official tenure. One was a murder in a railway carriage by a man named Lefroy; the other was a case where a man was deliberately murdered by his own brother in the most cruel and systematic way. He did not believe that in either of those two cases the opinion of the country would have been satisfied unless there had been a capital execution. In the case of those deliberate murders it was, in his opinion, impossible to dispense with capital punishment. Coming to the Amendment of his hon. Friend opposite, he claimed to approach it with the greatest possible desire to find a solution of the problem by means suggested by the Amendment. No man who had held the Office of Home Secretary but must desire that the decision in these cases should be removed, if it could be safely done, from his shoulders to those of the Judge and jury. In 1882 he examined this question as carefully as he could, with a view and with the desire to give effect to the Report of the Royal Commission of 1866, and he drew up a Memorandum with the object of giving effect to those recommendations. He desired, at any rate, to give effect to the spirit of the recommendations of the Commission, and he found that those views had been accepted by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, his Predecessor in Office in 1881. It seemed to him that this was a question which could be approached safely without any chance of any considerable difference of opinion in Parliament on the subject. Accordingly, he drew up a Bill for the purpose of giving effect to those conclusions. The Bill proposed, in its 1st clause, that murder should be of two degrees; and, in the 2nd clause, it was provided that whosoever should unlawfully with intent to kill any other person cause the death of such person should be guilty of murder in the first degree. It also provided that the intent to kill should be presumed from doing an act or omitting to do any act, the natural and probable consequences of which would be to cause death. Then the intent to kill might be negatived by circumstances which might be proved to exist, and there must be that control over his will which governed an ordinary man in his action. In order to constitute the crime of murder in the first degree, the jury must expressly find an intent to kill. Then the 3rd clause, which embraced all other murders, made them murders in the second degree, and provided that they should be punishable with penal servitude for life, or for any less term as the Judge might see fit. Then the Bill provided that in the case of murder in the first degree, if the Judge was of opinion that the sentence of death should not be executed, he might pass a sentence of penal servitude for life, or any less term as he might think fit. Those were the main provisions of the Bill which he drew up. He then took the opportunity of consulting with persons who were best competent to advise him in this matter. Among others he consulted Sir George Grey, Mr. Justice Fitzjames Stephen, Mr. Justice Hawkins, and most of the Judges. He was bound to say that the conclusion he arrived at was not satisfactory to his mind. No man should take the responsibility of voting on this subject unless he had tried himself to frame a definition on the subject which would hold water. He tried to frame a definition; but he found that it was not satisfactory, because it included cases which ought not to be included, and excluded others which ought to have been included. He devoted many weeks of conscientious labour to this question, and he abandoned the attempt, because he satisfied himself that the thing could not be done, as he desired it to be, in accordance with the Report of the Commission. To give an example, deliberate premeditation was considered to be of the essence of murder, and rightly punishable with death. Among the most premeditated, the most deliberately premeditated, murders of modern times, which the merciful spirit seldom visited with death, was the crime of infanticide. The definition of murder laid down by him would include infanticide, and that illustrated the difficulty of drawing these definitions. When he set to work he thought there would be little difficulty in drawing definitions; but after consultation with Sir George Grey and some of the most eminent of the Judges he gave up the attempt. As things were now, very great care was taken by Judges and juries in these cases. And, moreover, there was now an interval of about three weeks between sentence and execution, instead of 24 hours, as in former days, so that there was ample time for the clemency of the Crown to be exercised. Moreover, every care was taken that whenever reasonable doubt surrounded a case the presumption should be in favour of mercy. For these reasons, although he had every disposition to accept the principle embodied in the Amendment of the hon. Member opposite, he could not support it; and, for the reason he had previously stated, he could not support the Motion. If other persons were more successful than he was in finding definitions which were thoroughly satisfactory, he should then be prepared to support the principle of the Amendment; but he could not support any general Resolution of this character, unless he could see clearly that the matter could be properly carried out. With regard to the execution of the capital sentence, no doubt cases had occurred which had greatly shocked the public sentiment on that subject. But he failed to see how the remedy which was proposed would cure the evils alluded to. There was no person holding the office of public executioner; but anyone might be employed for the purpose of carrying out the sentence of the law by the Sheriff. As a matter of fact, the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex, being responsible for the executions at Newgate, had been in the habit of selecting a person to carry out executions, and their choice had practically been adopted by the Sheriffs throughout the country. When a vacancy took place in this office, the Sheriffs of London received as many as 600 or 700 applications; and they took the greatest pains, no doubt, to choose the best person they could find for the office. He did not see how the Government could do better than this. The more respectable classes of the community, unless they were very eccentric, would not take the position of an executioner; and as men were not born executioners, the best men that offered must be taken. He did not see how it was possible for the Government to make a better choice than the Sheriffs of London now did. He might remind the House, further, that it was an old Constitutional principle that the execution of the sentences of the law should not be in the Crown. It was part of our ancient system of local government in this country, and the execution of the sentences of the law were still vested in the Sheriffs. No doubt, if there were reasons for departing from the ancient principle and adopting a new system it would be done, and the old doctrine would not be allowed to stand in the way; but, in the present case, he did not see how the Government would be likely to appoint a better man. For the reasons he had previously offered, he was unable to support either the Motion or the Amendment.

Sir JOHN GORST (Chatham) said, he thought most Members of the House must have listened to the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer with a very great feeling of disappointment. Of course, nobody expected that the right hon. Gentleman would be able to support the original Motion. Formerly the abolition of capital punishment was the burning question; but those days had passed away, and many who some years ago were in favour of the total abolition of capital punishment had changed their views, and were now in favour of limiting that punishment to a small and well-defined class of cases. The vast majority of the Members of that House were most anxious to see the punishment of death limited, as far as possible, to those cases of murder in which the general public conscience and the general public opinion admitted the application of the penalty of death to be appropriate. But it was believed by everybody that, according to the present state of our law, there was a very great number of cases in which people were tried for murder and sentenced to death, and in which no person would think of carrying the sentence into execution. It was not desirable that persons should be sentenced to death in cases where they could not possibly be executed. Convictions in such cases, and the necessity there was for the Home Secretary to interfere with the due course of law, were extremely detrimental to the interests of public justice. Therefore there was a general desire on the part of all persons concerned in this question that the definition of murder should, if possible, be so limited as to apply only to those cases in which death would be the proper and appropriate punishment. The Royal Commission of 1866, which was composed of lawyers and statesmen of the highest eminence, recommended that such an alteration should be made in the law; but now, 20 years afterwards, they were told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that such an amendment of the law was practically impossible. The right hon. Gentleman would find a solution of the difficulty if he turned to the clauses of the Bill for establishing a Criminal Code that was introduced in that House many years ago by the late Sir John Holker. The right hon. Gentleman could not even hold out a hope that better provision would be made in future for the carrying out of executions. It was a disgrace to our civilization that in this 19th century, when all were agreed that the sentence of death ought to be carried out in the most decorous and humane way that the resources of knowledge and science could devise, we were almost the only nation in the world which left the carrying out of that solemn sentence to mere haphazard, and the bungling incapacity of any person who undertook the task. [The Chancellor of the Exchequer dissented.] The Chancellor of the Exchequer shook his head; but there had been cases where the High Sheriffs of counties had been glad to lay hold of almost anybody who would undertake to carry out the sentence of the law. Moreover, there had been cases in recent times where the sentence had been carried out by wholly incompetent persons. He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would find it possible to prevent the recurrence of scandals which had horrified the public, and which, if repeated, would put a stop to capital punishment altogether. In conclusion, he expressed a hope that hon. Gentlemen would vote for the Amendment of the hon. Member for Sheffield, by way of showing the desire they cherished in regard to this important subject.

Mr. E. RIDER COOK (West Ham, N.) said, the mode of inflicting the death penalty which prevailed in this country was very barbarous. It was a happy augury that public opinion revolted against the mode of inflicting death; and he hoped that was a presage that the time would come when public opinion would revolt against the sentence of death itself. There were other modes of taking life besides the barbarous way of hanging a man by the neck until he was dead. The present method of putting criminals to death in these days of anæsthetics was barbarous in the extreme; and if the punishment was to be inflicted some less painful and revolting form of death might be devised. He hoped that even in the most aggravated cases of murder it would ultimately become unnecessary to take the life of the offender, but to commit him to a life-long period of penal servitude. He hoped, however, that his hon. Friend would carry his Motion to a division, and to a successful division.

Sir R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton) said, he agreed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that, so long as the punishment remained, it was absolutely necessary that as little pain as possible should be inflicted. When he was last at the Home Office he appointed a Departmental Committee to consider how that could best be done, and had called the most eminent men in the country to his assistance. He understood that the Committee had not yet reported; but he was assured that they saw their way to carry out what he had long at heart. He had come to the conclusion that, if properly carried out, hanging involved as little pain as any form of death. Every Secretary of State from the days of Sir George Grey had pronounced against the advisability of making the executioner an officer of State, and in favour of holding the Sheriff responsible. As to the main question, he believed the death punishment was absolutely necessary in order to deter men from the crime of murder. After a long experience at the Home Office, and after careful consideration of the question, he was convinced that in the present state of society it would not be safe to abolish capital punishment, which was the greatest possible deterrent to the crime of murder. Still, he thought it should only be resorted to in cases of murder with malice aforethought, which was the most aggravated case of murder. The Royal Commission of 1866 recommended that a distinction should be drawn between one murder and another. Sir George Grey was Secretary of State at the time, and he prepared a Bill to carry out the recommendation. The Government went out, and Mr. Walpole, who succeeded Sir George Grey at the Home Office, found that his Predecessor's Bill would not hold water. He did not despair in the matter, and thought that the Committee of Judges who prepared the Criminal Code could satisfactorily deal with the question. He should certainly render all the assistance he could in endeavouring to find a definition of the crime of murder by which, at all events, the operation of the law might be confined to fewer cases. Though he could not, therefore, vote for the abolition of the death punishment, he should vote with the Mover of the Amendment, which he believed was the course suggested should be adopted by the Royal Commission and the Judges who had drawn up the Criminal Code.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.) said, that, as he had only held his present Office for three months, he had thought it better that his right hon. Friend (Sir William Harcourt), who had been Home Secretary for five years, should speak first. His right hon. Friend and himself had on a former occasion expressed an opinion in favour of the abolition of capital punishment; but on a reconsideration of the question he had come to the conclusion that public opinion was not yet ripe for such a course, and that it would not now be wise or safe to vote for the Motion. His right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt), when at the Home Office, devoted a considerable portion of his time to the collecting of information from Judges and others who were specially competent to give advice upon this question with regard to the dividing of murder and manslaughter cases into three categories, and he did not see his way to adopt the recommendation of the Royal Commission upon the subject. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir R. Assheton Cross) who spoke last was in Office as Home Secretary for seven years after the Report of the Royal Commission was presented, but did not take any steps with the view of adopting the recommendation of the Commission in this respect. The right hon. Gentleman had also been in Office since his right hon. Friend had collected the information to which he had referred, which information formed a very considerable fraction of the Records of the Department, and yet he had arrived at no decision in the matter. In these circumstances, was it not hazardous that the right hon. Gentleman should now advise the House in a single sentence to adopt in principle what in practice he was unable to carry out? The Government could not advise the House to arrive at the conclusion at which the right hon. Gentleman wished them to arrive, and they felt it to be their duty to oppose both the original Motion and also the Amendment.

SIR R. ASSHETON CROSS wished to explain, in reference to the remark of the Home Secretary, that during the seven years the late Conservative Government were in Office they took no steps to deal with the recommendations of the Royal Commission, that at the desire of Sir John Holker, then Attorney General, the question of categories was dealt with in the Criminal Code Bill.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, there was no reference in the Criminal Code Bill to three categories; it had no connection with that.

Sir JOHN GORST said, that the definition of murder in the Criminal Code Bill corresponded with two of the categories recommended by the Royal Commission of 1866.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that a definition of murder could not correspond to two categories.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE said that, as the Amendment was said to be impracticable, he would suggest that the House should adopt the only alternative, which was to vote for his Motion, and thus get rid of the whole question of capital punishment.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 63; Noes 117: Majority 54.

AYES.

Abraham, W. (Glam.)
Abraham, W. (Limerick, W.)
Allison, R. A.
Arch, J.
Armitage, B.
Atherley-Jones, L.
Biggar, J. G.
Blake, T.
Blane, A.
Bradlaugh, C.
Bright, W. L.
Brunner, J. T.
Burt, T.
Byrne, G. M.
Campbell, H.
Chance, P. A.
Connolly, L.
Conway, M.
Conybeare, C. A. V.
Cossham, H.
Craven, J.
Crawford, W.
Fenwick, C.
Gill, T. P.
Gourley, E. T.
Hayden, L. P.
Holden, A.
Holden, I.
Howell, G.
Hoyle, I.
Illingworth, A.
Jordan, J.
Kelly, B.
Lane, W. J.
Leahy, J.
Leicester, J.
Mather, W.
Morgan, O. V.
Nolan, J.
O'Brien, W.
O'Doherty, Dr. K. I.
O'Hanlon, T.
Paget, T. T.
Pease, H. F.
Pilkington, G. A.
Power, P. J.
Redmond, J. E.
Richard, H.
Richardson, T.
Robson, W. S.
Roe, T.
Russell, E. R.
Sheehan, J. D.
Shirley, W. S.
Stack, J.
Storey, S.
Swinburne, Sir J.
Tanner, C. K.
Watson, T.
Williams, J. C.
Wilson, H. J.
Wilson, I.
Wilson, J. (Durham)

TELLERS.

Cook, E. R.
Pease, Sir J. W.

NOES.

Acland, A. H. D.
Acland, C. T. D.
Agg-Gardner, J. T.
Allen, H. G.
Allen, W. S.
Asher, A.
Balfour, rt. hon. J. B.
Balfour, G. W.
Barnes, A.
Baumann, A. A.
Bennett, J.
Beresford, Lord C. W. De la Poer
Bethell, Commander
Bickersteth, R.
Bigwood, J.
Blades, J. H.
Blaine, R. S.
Borlase, W. C.
Borthwick, Sir A.
Boyd-Kinnear, J.
Brodrick, hon. W. St. J. F.
Caine, W. S.
Childers, right hon. H. C. E.
Coleridge, hon. B.
Corbett, A. C.
Cox, J. R.
Crilly, D.
Crompton, C.
Cross, rt. hn. Sir R. A.
Crossley, Sir S. B.
Dalrymple, C.
Davies, D.
Davies, W.
De Cobain, E. S. W.
Dickson, Major A. G.
Dimsdale, Baron R.
Donkin, R. S.
Douglas, A. Akers-
Duckham, T.
Duncan, Colonel F.
Durant, J. C.
Dyke, rt. hon. Sir W. H.
Ellis, J.
Ferguson, R.
Flower, C.
Fraser, General C. C.
Gladstone, H. J.
Goldsmid, Sir J.
Goldsworthy, Major-General W. T.
Gorst, Sir J. E.
Gower, G. G. L.
Greenall, Sir G.
Gregory, G. B.
Grove, Sir T. F.
Haldane, R. B.
Harcourt, rt. hn. Sir W. G. V. V.
Harker, W.
Harrington, E.
Havelock-Allan, Sir H. M.
Healy, T. M.
Heaton, J. H.
Herbert, hon. S.
Hill, Lord A. W.
Hingley, B.
Holmes, rt. hon. H.
Howard, E. S.
Hunt, F. S.
Johnson-Ferguson, J. E.
Johnston, W.
Jones, P.
Kilcoursie, right hon. Viscount
Kimber, H.
Latham, G. W.
Lawson, H. L. W.
Leake, R.
Lethbridge, Sir R.
Llewellyn, E. H.
Lockwood, F.
Lyell, L.
M'Arthur, A.
Norton, R.
O'Shea, W. H.
Picton, J. A.
Playfair, rt. hon. Sir L.
Powell, F. S.
Powell, W. R. H.
Priestley, B.
Quilter, W. C.
Roberts, J.
Roberts, J. B.
Robertson, E.
Robinson, T.
Sheridan, H. B.
Sidebottom, W.
Spencer, hon. C. R.
Spicer, H.
Stansfeld, right hon. J.
Stevenson, F. S.
Stevenson, J. C.
Stewart, M. J.
Strong, R.
Sturrock, P.
Temple, Sir R.
Tuite, J.
Valentine, C. J.
Vanderbyl, P.
Vincent, C. E. H.
Wason, E.
Watson, J.
Watt, H.
Wayman, T.
Will, J. S.
Woodall, W.
Woodhead, J.
Wortley, C. B. Stuart-
Wright, C.
Young, C. E. B.

TELLERS.

Marjoribanks, rt. hon. E.
Morley, A.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

VALUATION OF REAL PROPERTY.

RESOLUTION.

Mr. DUCKHAM (Herefordshire, Leominster): Mr. Speaker, the question to which I wish to draw the attention of the House is one of very great importance to the ratepayers of this country, embracing, as it does, the necessity of passing a comprehensive measure for the valuation of real property for the purposes of Imperial and local taxation. One of the first questions which the Chambers of Agriculture took up was that of the rating of metallic mines, woods, and plantations; and one of the first Acts passed, for which the Chambers of Agriculture pressed, was an Act for that purpose. The Acts 25 & 26 *Vict.* and 27 & 28 *Vict.* were professedly framed for the uniform rating of real property liable to be assessed for the relief of the poor. In 1884 I obtained a Return of lands that were entirely out of occupation, and that Return showed that in 1881-2 99,521 acres were unoccupied, and in 1882-3 the acreage was reduced to 51,617 acres that were void and allowed to go to waste, and were consequently relieved from both Imperial and local taxation. The Income Tax returned, in the first of the periods mentioned, amounted to £2,328 19*s.* 10*d.*, and in 1882-3 to £1,374 13*s.* 3*d.* The local rates also suffered. The poor rates and other rates chargeable upon that property would have been considerably in excess of these sums. Therefore, the result of allowing that land to get into that condition was to place an increased burden upon the surrounding property. The same policy is still carried on, I am sorry to say, for only last Saturday I heard of an estate which was included in the Return of 1884 being still in the same disgraceful state, the herbage having been allowed year after year to grow up and rot down. The proprietor—a wealthy man—whose previous tenant was ruined by an excessive rent, repeatedly refused to let the land at a rent which a tenant could afford to pay. The disgraceful state of such property should, I think, form a matter for the serious consideration of the Head of the Local Government Board and of Her Majesty's Government generally. It is abominable that any landed proprietor should allow the grass on his land to grow up, fall down, and rot upon the ground without being utilized for the benefit of the people of the country, while so many millions of money are being sent abroad to obtain food to supply the wants of the people. The principle laid down by the 6 & 7 *Will.* IV. c. 96 is that no rate shall be of any force which shall not be made upon an estimate of the net annual value of the several hereditaments rated thereunto—that is to say, of the rent at which the same might reasonably be expected to be let from year to year. If that provision of the Act were carried out, this wealthy proprietor would not escape the payment justly due to the rates of his district. There is another little grievance, although it is but a small one. Formerly, when that Act was passed for rating real property, it applied to parochial rating. We have now adopted a system of Union or district rating, and not parochial rating. The Union Chargeability Act for the relief of the poor, and the district rating for the highways, bring all the property in the different parishes under the same head. Yet if a man occupies a farm, with a small rivulet running through it, which places one-half in one parish, and the other half in another, he has to pay in excess upon that portion which has no buildings upon it. Five per cent being allowed on that part upon which there are no buildings, and 10 per cent upon the rest, although it is all part of the same farm; whereas if it was all in one parish 10 per cent would be allowed upon the whole. These may be looked upon as trivial matters; but when the authorities are preparing—and we hope to see before long a good Valuation and County Government Bill—I trust that we shall have these inequalities and grievances redressed. As I have said, one of the first objects of the Chambers of Agriculture was to obtain power to rate metallic mines, woods, and plantations. The Act for carrying out that object was passed in 1874. Previously, underwood was rated at its value as underwood; but the heavy timber in the woods was not rateable, yet, when felled and removed, it does serious damage to the roads; but now, on appeal, the proprietor is able to obtain a reduction of 50 per cent in the rate, seeing that the land is to be assessed at its value in an unimproved state, on the supposition that everything has been cut down and carried away. Therefore, instead of getting some little assistance towards the rates from what we all felt to be a most valuable property, we get nothing whatever towards the rates; but, on the other hand, that which was formerly rated at its value as underwood pays upon a reduction of about 50 per cent. Hedge-row timber frequently seriously reduces the value of cultivated land. In one instance, I happen to know that a neighbour of mine offered to pay his landlord 10*s.* more per acre for his farm if he would consent to fell the hedge-row timber; but the landlord refused. The principle advocated by the Chambers of Agriculture was that no land should be rated at less than the value of the surrounding land of the same class. Then, again, a large portion of the landed properties in the country are overrun with game. That is not so much the case now as it was before the Hares and Rabbits Bill was passed; but it now has a material effect upon the annual value of the property. The principle adopted by the Assessment Committees is that the rating should be imposed in accordance with what the land is rented at. Therefore, the rent of farms which are overrun by game being reduced, the rates are also reduced, and an additional burden is placed upon the surrounding property. In my county the rating of woods has long been a burning question among the ratepayers of the different Unions. In the county of Hereford there are some 38,000 acres of woodlands in an area of some 500,000 acres. Therefore, these are most serious questions. In one Union the Assessment Committee valued 418 acres of woodlands at £186 10*s.* The rate was appealed against. The Chairman of the Assessment Committee was also the Chairman of Special Sessions and Quarter Sessions, and he was a consenting party to the making of the rate. Nevertheless, when the appeal came before him at Special Sessions the assessment was reduced to £57 10*s.*, being about 2*s.* 10*d.* per acre. The Assessment Committee felt much aggrieved at the decision, and regarded it as unjust. They, therefore, employed a competent surveyor to assess the property; his valuation was £154 10*s.*, with which they then assessed it. An appeal was made to Quarter Sessions, and it was then rated at £79 16*s.* 6*d.*, or little more than one-half the amount the Assessment Committee placed upon it, and amounting only to 3*s.* 9¾*d.* per acre. Now, that land, if it was divested of timber and cultivated, would be worth at least four times the amount at which it is now rated. There are large quantities of wood in the same Union which are now rated at 14*s.* an acre, and yet this property is assessed at only 3*s* .9¾*d.*, although a good portion of the land covered by the timber is near the mansion, and consists of plantations, ornamental ground, belts, and clumps of trees. To show the feeling that this mode of assessment has excited, I will, with your permission, read a passage from a letter which I hold in my hand from a ratepayer of the district. He says—

> "Our recent rating appeals have brought before me very strongly the injustice and unfairness of the present law, even when carried out fairly; and, of course, that injustice is greatly intensified when the Act is not fairly carried out. Previously to the last year, I think, the woods in this Union have been pretty fairly assessed according to the present Act."

The writer proceeds to say—

> "As the law at present stands, whether the Assessment Committee appeal to Special Sessions or Quarter Sessions, they have to go before one class of Judges—namely, Magistrates, who are chiefly landed proprietors, and who, while being also Judges, have a right, which you will see in the case before us was exercised, to attend and practically prevent an appeal from their decision. When this case was before the Quarter Sessions at Hereford, Mr. W. H. Cooke, Q.C., intimated that the Assessment Committee were liable to be indicted for conspiracy for having obtained new valuations of the woods after the decision of Special Sessions; and, as you will see, Sir Richard Harington practically repeated the threat at a meeting of Guardians."

It certainly will appear somewhat singular that an Assessment Committee appointed under an Act of Parliament for levying rates being threatened with indictment for conspiracy, because, in the exercise of their duty, they, feeling that injustice had been done by the Justices in the Special Sessions after having called to their assistance a qualified surveyor to value, presumed to appeal. Well, Sir, in the Report of the Assessment Committee upon the decision of the Court of Quarter Sessions they say—

> "There appears to be a larger quantity of ashbed than was accounted for to the Committee. 418 acres was the quantity accounted for and rated, but there appears to be 50 or 60 acres of land not rated at all."

This Report goes on to say—

> "The value put by the Court of Quarter Sessions upon the appellant's woods and lands is, in the opinion of your Committee, too low. Your Committee would, therefore, recommend that, in order to place the matter upon a proper footing and to insure that the appellant should be rated in comparison with other ratepayers in the Union, the whole of the appellant's lands and woods in the parishes appealed against should be scheduled and valued by some competent and independent person or persons."

Further on the Vice Chairman said—

> "He thought that the incidence of the rates should be fairly and properly treated, and a rich man, because he happened to have land in his possession, should not have it assessed at a nominal sum. The woods throughout the Union were rated, on an average, at 14*s*. per acre, and it was manifestly unjust to single out one gentleman and assess the virgin soil of Herefordshire at 3*s*. or 4*s*. per acre."

Allow me, Sir, to make another little extract from the same Paper, and to quote the language of the Chairman, who was, as I have said before, also Chairman of the Court of Quarter Sessions, Chairman of the Special Sessions, and Chairman of the Assessment Committee under whom all of these different valuations were made. This gentleman said—

> "With regard to the rateable value of the land in question, members of the Assessment Committee would not forget that land with timber growing upon it had, by a special provision, to be assessed at its unimproved value."

That is the manner in which, under the Act of 1874, the rateable value is to be assessed by the Court. The effect of this system of procedure is this. The Guardians have strongly protested against the result of the appeals; and as those who attempted to amend the valuation list were threatened with an indictment for conspiracy, the newly-elected Guardians have refused to act upon the Assessment Committee. Turning from the Bromyard to the Newent Union, I have here a letter from a tenant farmer, who informs me that a few years ago he took a farm at a rental of £270 a-year, but that the Assessment Committee in that Union assessed him at £365. He writes of the farm he occupies as—

> "Some of the poorest arable land in the county, which, during the past three years, has not paid the cost of cultivation; whereas in the Bromyard case the appellant, a country gentleman, a man of wealth and position and influence, obtains in all cases the full reduction asked for, and gets the whole of his costs, whilst I have to pay the full costs myself, £200. I paid last year two rates, one at 1*s*. 4*d*. and the other at 1*s*. 5*d*. in the pound, a sum of £13 9*s*. 2*d*. more than if I had been rated at the actual gross rent."

Now, he had appealed to the Assessment Committee, then to the Special Sessions, and lastly to the Quarter Sessions, with the result he had named. He took the land when, in consequence of the depressed times, it was lying idle, and had been advertised to let for some weeks. He took it at the highest rent that could be obtained; but the Assessment Committee placed the value at 35 per cent more than the rent he has to pay. The injustice with which he has been treated has created a strong feeling of discontent not only in his mind, but in the minds of other people. Four or five very excellent men of business—men of judgment, and well qualified to give evidence of the value of the farm, gave evidence before the Quarter Sessions; but their evidence was of no avail. The person whom the Assessment Committee had themselves employed to value the land was present in Court; but the Assessment Committee were afraid to call him, because he, like the tenant's valuers, had placed a less value upon it. Turning from that Union, I come to the one in which I live myself, and there an arbitrary rule is laid down that rent shall be taken as the value by the Assessment Committee. The men who hold under liberal landlords are, in these times of severe depression, able to obtain a great reduction in their rent; but the men who hold under needy landlords are unable to get such an advantage; and, in addition to paying excessive rent, they have also to bear an undue proportion of the rates. I have shown that one Union adopts rent as the basis; another Union sets rent at defiance; whereas all should be treated alike, in order that they may pay upon a uniform and equitable basis. This is a serious matter, and one which ought to be carefully considered by the Government when preparing a County Government Bill. There are many expenses incurred by the proprietors of land in erecting buildings and making drains, and in effecting other improvements, and yet no allowance is made for these things from the Property Tax. It is surely right that when a landlord expends heavy sums in permanent improvements that he should be allowed an abatement, and not have to pay Income Tax when he does not receive any rent, but is put to considerable expense in erecting what is requisite for the use of the holding, and which does increase the annual value of the holding afterwards. I hope I have said sufficient to show that there are inequalities which amount to gross injustice existing in our system, and that there is room for a full and comprehensive measure of relief. I beg to move the Resolution which stands in my name.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.), in seconding the Motion, said that it was noticeable as regarded taxation that the poorer the property the more heavily was it taxed. There were many descriptions of property which at the present time escaped taxation altogether. The value of the land of this country had greatly increased, and one of the ablest statisticians estimated the present value of landed property at something like £2,000,000,000 sterling. He would like to get a Return of the proportion paid by these £2,000,000,000 towards the Imperial and local taxes of the country. It was also said that £10,000,000 sterling annually went into the pockets of landowners in the shape of rents and royalties from mines. He would like to know how much these paid? Then, as to ground-rents, he did not see why they should be exempted. It was the greatest possible anomaly that ground-rents should not be subject at all to local taxation. In the Mid Lothian Manifesto it was held out to the nation that local government, which would afford the means of remedying all these matters, would be dealt with in the present Parliament. He sincerely trusted that that pledge would be redeemed, and hoped the Government would bring in a measure on the subject.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a comprehensive measure for regulating the valuation of property for the purposes of Imperial and Local Taxation is essentially necessary."—(*Mr. Duckham.*)

Mr. GREGORY (Sussex, East Grinstead) said, he objected to being asked to deal with so important a subject on an abstract Resolution; but the hon. Member (Mr. Duckham) who had brought forward this Motion was justified in calling attention to it, because there was no one who did not feel that the question of the assessment of property was not on a satisfactory footing. There were two systems, one for Imperial and one for local purposes, and the local assessments were again divided into rural and urban. There was no great principle by which these assessments could be regulated except that laid down by the Courts—that the value of the property was what a solvent tenant would pay for it. That was a rough and ready method of finding the value, and nothing more. But he was afraid that, whatever principle might be laid down, it would still come to this—that valuation was a matter of opinion. For his part, he doubted very much whether any broad general principle could be laid down upon which assessments were to be made. It seemed to him, however, that the direction in which they could satisfactorily go would be to constitute some better and more efficient Court of Assessment, some more satisfactory tribunal for deciding assessments, than existed at present; and if the question was to be dealt with in a large and comprehensive spirit, it would necessarily involve the equalization of the burdens between real and personal property, for which they had contended for so many years on his side of the House.

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Stansfeld) (Halifax) said, that the hon. Member who had just sat down always spoke with authority on this subject; but he could not agree with him that the Motion of the hon. Member for Hereford (Mr. Duckham) did not go in the right direction in this matter. The hon. Member seemed to think that it would be impossible to lay down any general principle for dealing with assessments. It seemed to him, however, that it was impossible to deny that a comprehensive measure for the purpose of assimilating the assessments for the purpose of Imperial and local taxation was absolutely essential and necessary. He had himself introduced a Rating Bill in 1873. If the fates willed it he should be glad to repeat the experiment of 1873. The Bill was thrown out in the House of Lords, but was, in a practically unchanged form, passed in 1874 by his Successor the right hon. Member for North Hants (Mr. Sclater-Booth). That Act determined the classes of property to be rated, and to a certain extent the method of valuation to be followed. The hon. Member for Herefordshire had pointed out defects of which he was not disposed to deny the existence. But the Bill was closely discussed, clause by clause, and line by line, by men who, with their experience of their own estates, knew much more of the subject than he did himself. His hon. Friend had pointed out defects in the 4th section of the Act, which dealt with the assessment of plantations and woods. It was very likely that the experience of 13 or 14 years had revealed defects which it was impossible to foresee at the time. It was said that Unions were in some cases disposed to regard the interests of proprietors rather than of the community. It had been thought that the Assessment Committees would regard the interests of the parish rather than of individuals; but if that partiality were displayed, no doubt a legislative remedy ought to be applied. He should be happy, if opportunity were afforded him, to deal with those questions, and also with the much larger question of local government generally. No doubt there were defects in methods of valuation; but in 1873 it was thought wiser, and it was wiser, as a general rule, to go upon the broad principle of what a hypothetical tenant would pay, and leave the Assessment Committees to work the question out. It might be now that they could go a step further. Two or three methods had been suggested of ascertaining the valuation of mines, and other suggestions might be made with regard to property of other kinds. No doubt, also, the machinery of assessment required some change. Those were sensible provisions which made the Assessment Committees the primary Assessing Bodies, subject to appeals to the Petty and Quarter Sessions. But there were difficulties in the course pursued with respect to different properties in different Unions. It was desirable, not only in the interest of local, but also of Imperial taxation, that these differences should be done away with. In 1869 a Valuation Act was passed for the Metropolis; and in another Bill—a Valuation Bill—which he had also brought in in 1873, he had followed the lines of that Act. He thought the only way of settling this question with regard to Imperial taxation was to introduce the surveyor of taxes. But he found that there was considerable jealousy of that proceeding in the Union and other County Authorities. It was, however, impossible to secure uniformity of valuation, not only as between Union and Union, but also between county and county, for the purpose of local and Imperial taxation, unless some authority intervened which represented the country as a whole.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, he thought there was a general concurrence of opinion that the present law of assessment was unsatisfactory, and also that perhaps no system could be devised which would be entirely satisfactory to everybody. He thought they might likewise gather from the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Stansfeld) that the state of things at which we had arrived imposed upon us a special difficulty in regard to this question. It was pretty certain that, whatever course was taken to amend the law of assessment, the lines of the Metropolis Valuation Act must be, to a certain extent, followed. The main purposes of that Act, according to its Preamble, were to provide a common basis of value for the purposes of government and local taxation, and to promote uniformity of rating property in the Metropolis. Those, however, who had followed the history of this matter must be aware that the passing of that measure had increased the difficulties which Parliament must encounter in dealing with the subject in the country as a whole. There were two tendencies in reference to assessment. Generally speaking, the Assessing Bodies for local purposes desired to make assessment as high as possible; but for Imperial purposes the desire was to make it as low as possible. The result of the conflict of these two ideas in the Metropolis had been to raise the valuation for Imperial purposes above its average in the country; and consequently there was a disposition on the part of those who represented the country outside the Metropolis not to encourage the extension of the system which was the basis of the Metropolis Valuation Act. In the Metropolis that subject presented less difficulty, and the right hon. Gentleman had indicated perhaps the only mode of dealing with the case in the country generally—namely, by the importation of the surveyor of taxes. He hoped that, in any measure applicable to the whole country, care would be taken to deal with the defects in the Metropolitan Act. As an instance of points requiring attention, he might refer to that of appeals to the Assessment Committee. In some parts of the Metropolis sufficient notice was not given of the time when appeals to the Assessment Committee would come on for hearing, the consequence being that many persons were obliged to submit to an unfair assessment or else appeal, at much greater cost, to the Quarter Sessions. He trusted that whenever a general system was brought forward for the whole country the machinery of the Metropolis Valuation Act would be carefully overhauled.

Resolution *agreed to.*

INCOME TAX.—RESOLUTION.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.), in rising to call attention to the way in which Income Tax was levied; and to move—

> "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the way in which Income Tax is levied, especially on unlet property, on partially let property, on property rated above its present letting value, on the investments of Insurance Companies, Savings and other Banks, and other cases in which Income Tax is claimed on more than the income actually received,"

said, he wished to remind the House of a few instances in which excessive hardship was inflicted upon those who had to pay Income Tax on larger sums than they were really earning. The real crux of this point was the payment of the collectors and assistant commissioners by a system of poundage. In all the Associations which were growing up for the reform and better administration of the Income Tax, the first principle laid down was that the poundage system should be done away with. The way in which the Income Tax was assessed led to serious anomalies and excesses. Since he introduced the subject in the debate on the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill he had received many letters thanking him for having called attention to the excessive payments which in various instances people had to make. In one case a man was called on to pay Income Tax on £3,000 a-year profit, when at the end of the year he was a bankrupt. In another case a man who had earned only £8 profit for three years was required to pay on £50 a-year. In another more startling case he had been shown the accounts of a Company which, though losing £20,000 a-year for some years, was paying Income Tax on £12,000 a-year profit. There was another class of injustice—small doctors who were paid salaries by Boards of Guardians for attending to the poor, and also a certain amount of extra fees, were made to pay on the full amount of their earnings, and had no allowance made to them for expenditure on drugs and other necessaries of their Profession, and which came out of their income. Again, as to depreciation of profit, if a man purchased a patent, say, for £10,000, if it brought in an income of £1,000 a-year he was required to pay Income Tax on that sum, though the patent might terminate at the end of 10 years. Then there was the uncertainty of the law on this subject, rendering it highly important that there should be a complete investigation. He was connected with an Institution which had been going on for 15 years. During that time there had been three surveyors of taxes with whom the Company had been concerned. The first surveyor thought that depreciation, whether on their leases or on their furniture, was not to be considered as income, and allowed them to deduct it on both. Unfortunately, a second surveyor took his place for five years, and he held that neither the one nor the other should be exempt. And now they had a third, and he held that depreciation on leases was income, but depreciation on furniture was not. Therefore, though we had had Income Tax for 40 years, within 15 years it was possible to have three different decisions upon the same subject. He thought that he had made out his second position—that some Committee ought to be appointed for the purpose of laying down distinctly, clearly, and finally the mode in which the Income Tax should be assessed. It was notorious that in large towns the assessment of houses was very often in excess of their letting value, and Income Tax was charged upon the full assessable value though that amount might not have been earned. People did not complain so much when the tax was only 2*d.* or 3*d.* in the pound; but when it was 8*d.*, and, concurrently with that, trade was bad and the small tradesmen did not know where to turn, then people did complain, and it was the duty of that House to see that the tax was levied in the fairest possible manner. The constituency which he represented was very largely composed of small tradesmen, who were greatly interested in the subject, and that House was bound to see that no hardship was inflicted, while it was also bound to see that everybody paid his full share. Reports from different Associations in such places as Wolverhampton and Birmingham showed that they were not satisfied with the system of assessment or appeal. The tax should be limited to income that was earned—not to the gross income, but to the net sum which a man put into his pocket. The hon. Gentleman concluded by moving his Resolution.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the way in which Income Tax is levied, especially on unlet property, on partially let property, on property rated above its present letting value, on the investments of Insurance Companies, Savings and other Banks, and other cases in which Income Tax is claimed on more than the income actually received."—(*Mr. Bartley.*)

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.) said, that, with all respect to the hon. Member, he did not think he had made out a case to support the Motion which he had put upon the Paper of the House. If he had understood the hon. Member correctly, what he chiefly objected to was the present mode of remunerating collectors by a poundage, and the means of appeal against assessments. The Government had really very little control over the Income Tax. That tax, he should think more than any other tax levied in this country, was levied, so to speak, outside the Government, and was in the hands of local gentlemen, who were selected for the purpose, and had special qualifications; and, as a matter of fact, the Government had hardly anything whatever to do with it. For the special purpose of dealing with cases under Schedule B, under which traders were assessed, special commissioners were set apart, and if a taxpayer was not satisfied with their assessment, he had the right of appeal to Somerset House. He could hardly conceive it possible to devise a machinery more perfectly in the hands of the taxpayers themselves than the machinery under which the Income Tax was assessed and levied, and more independent of the Government. The principle of the Income Tax was always administered with great wisdom, great forbearance, and great equity. Very strong Committees had been twice appointed to investigate the whole mode of assessing the Income Tax, and both had reported that they could do nothing. He did not think that was any encouragement to the House to embark again in the matter. With reference to the poundage question, he entirely agreed with the hon. Member on that point, and he was happy to say that now the collection of taxes in all the large towns had passed into the hands of the Inland Revenue. If the hon. Member had been prepared with a Motion on the poundage question, he would have felt very great difficulty in opposing him. The hon. Member had raised the very old question of the principle on which the Income Tax was levied. That principle had been discussed over and over again on the old question whether income arising from an uncertain source was to be taxed at the same rate as income arising from a certain source. But the principle which the House of Commons had affirmed over and over again was that the Income Tax was to be levied upon the income for the year, and that property should pay upon the actual income value, and trades and professions upon the actual net income earned. There were a great many complaints made about the returns made by surveyors; but inaccuracies were due to the reluctance of taxpayers to make returns themselves. It was the duty of the taxpayer to make his own return, and what the House ought to require was a case of an honest taxpayer who had made an honest return being unfairly charged beyond what he ought to pay. If the tribunal which the State had selected to hear appeals failed to do justice in such a case, it would be the duty of the House to inquire whether any other tribunal could be substituted for it. No such failure, however, had been proved; and under the circumstances he was bound to say that he did not think a case had been made out for a Committee, as he did not see any probability that another Committee, if appointed, could inquire into the working of the tax with any better result than had attended the efforts of the two Committees that had previously sat. While, however, on the one hand, the Government did not think that any case had been made out for a Parliamentary inquiry, on the other hand the Treasury and the Inland Revenue would be exceedingly obliged to any hon. Member who would bring before their notice any case of hardship. Any such case should certainly be inquired into.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London) said, the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) had, no doubt, said all that was to be said in favour of the tax; but still there was a great deal to be said in favour of inquiry. He feared they must look on the tax as a permanent charge; at all events, he was not sanguine enough that they would be able to get rid of it. Sir Robert Peel had originally intended that the Income Tax should endure for three years only; while the Prime Minister had offered to abolish it; and yet at the present moment it stood at 8*d.* in the pound, and appeared likely to increase in case of war. Inequalities in levying the Income Tax could hardly be dealt with by the whole House, and he thought that they might very properly be referred to a Committee for inquiry. He, therefore, cordially supported the Motion.

SIR WHITTAKER ELLIS (Surrey, Kingston) said, what he feared was that the Income Tax being looked upon as a permanent tax, it would be extended to a very large degree. He, therefore, considered that this Motion raised a question of the deepest interest to the community, inasmuch as a tendency had been indicated to throw a larger burden upon all forms of property. The mode of collecting the tax deserved the serious consideration of the House. He cordially supported the Motion.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 63; Noes 174: Majority 111.—(Div. List, No. 94.)

LOSSES BY RIOT (COMPENSATION) BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I rise to fulfil a pledge I gave to the House when carrying through the Bill for giving compensation for damage done in London during the riot on the 8th of February last. The Bill I now ask leave to introduce, which is entitled a measure "To Provide Compensation for Losses by Riots," will extend to the whole of England and Wales, and is framed mainly according to the provisions of the Metropolitan Act. I will give the House one or two of the leading features of the measure, and will then ask for it a first reading. It will give compensation to the insured as well as to the uninsured—that is, it will allow the uninsured to stand in the shoes of the insured. Power is given to the Secretary of State to lay down general regulations under which the claims should be submitted. The area within which the contribution is to be made will be that of the police district in which the damage is done. If, for instance, it was done in a town having a police force, then the police rate of that town would bear the expense; in the same way, if it was a county, the police rate of the county would bear it. There are, however, two exceptions. One is where the county has been divided into districts under a special Act, the only instance of which, I believe, at present, is Lancashire. There the district, and not the county, would bear the expense. The other exception is where a borough has come to an arrangement with the county, under which the county police does the police work for the borough. There the expense would be shared between the county which provided the police and the borough itself, according to the proportions agreed upon for sharing this expense. That is really the whole scope of the Bill. On other points, as I have said, it will follow the provisions of the measure which became law the other day for London. I do not propose that it shall be retrospective, although possibly some clause of a retrospective kind might be introduced of a very limited character. The Bill, however, will not be generally retrospective, any more than the London Bill was. It will be circulated in a few days, and I will ask hon. Gentlemen to postpone their criticism until they see it. In conclusion, I beg to ask leave to introduce the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to give Compensation for Losses by Riot."—(*Mr. Secretary Childers.*)

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I will not do more than offer a few observations on behalf of several hon. Members who sit on this side of the House, who urged this question on the attention of the right hon. Gentleman, and to whom the right hon. Gentleman gave the promise to bring in the Bill as soon as it was in his power. So far as I can judge, the measure appears to carry out the ideas of those Members of the House who spoke on the previous occasion, except in one respect—and that was the last point to which the right hon. Gentleman alluded—namely, that it is not to be retrospective. Amongst the strong cases that were brought forward by way of argument, and pressed on the attention of the Government, was the particular case of Nottingham. I see the hon. Member for Nottingham (Mr. Carvell Williams) in his place, and probably he may be inclined to say a word on the matter. If the Bill is not made retrospective at all, the case of Nottingham and one or two other places will be altogether left out of the Bill. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will not refuse, on the part of the Government, to consider any cases of a retrospective character that may be properly brought within the purview of the Bill.

Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Nottingham, S.): I am glad to acknowledge the promptitude with which the right hon. Gentleman has fulfilled his promise to introduce this general measure; but my satisfaction is somewhat diminished by the statement he has made, that the Bill is not to be retrospective in its character. The measure, in that respect, will be quite inconsistent with the provisions of the London Bill, in consequence of the passing of which the present Bill was promised. The Bill to give compensation to those whose property was injured through riots in London was wholly retrospective. I do not see how any distinction can be logically drawn between payments on account of occurrences that have happened in London, and payments on account of similar occurrences that have happened in the country. I still venture to press on the right hon. Gentleman the propriety and necessity of reconsidering this point. And at least I wish to express this hope, that he will provide in his Bill that wherever the Local Authority is willing to give compensation, it shall be in the power of that Local Authority to do so. I have reason to believe that that would meet the wish of the town, a division of which I have the honour to represent. The Corporation of Nottingham has funds to pay for damages. They are not unwilling to pay the compensation, but they are prevented from doing so by the present uncertain state of the law. If the authorities in that and other towns are willing to pay they should have permission to do so; and I must say I should be better pleased with the Bill if it contained a provision of even a more general character, so that relief might be given to those who have suffered from riotous proceedings during the past few months.

Sir R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): I do not see the use of carrying on a discussion on this Bill at the present moment. I will myself set an example—I will say no more, except that I am glad the opportunity has arrived for remedying what is really a very serious defect in the law.

Mr. CHILDERS: I have no right of reply; but with the permission of the House I will state that the point concerning the individual case of rioting mentioned shall be considered. If this were made a generally retrospective Bill it would be found impracticable to carry it out. If I rightly understand the hon. Member, he proposes that if it is the desire of the Local Authority that compensation should be paid to persons who have suffered losses through riots within certain limits of time, power should be given them to pay it, and that the measure should be made retrospective to that extent, the proposal is one to which I will undertake to give the best attention.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Secretary CHILDERS, Mr. BROADHURST, and Mr. ATTORNEY GENERAL.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 209.]

LAND TRANSFER (SCOTLAND) BILL.

(*Mr. Boyd-Kinnear, Mr. Bruce, Mr. Mason, Mr. M'Laren.*)

[BILL 144.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. BOYD-KINNEAR (Fife, E.): I beg to move the second reading of this Bill. I venture to think that, at all events, the object of this Bill is one which will commend itself to Gentlemen on both sides of the House, for I think there is nothing which we are more generally agreed upon, and there is nothing more desired in the way of land reform in the country, than that it should be possible to transfer land from hand to hand in a more simple, easy, and inexpensive way than it is possible to adopt at present. The matter is one that strongly affects wealthy persons, and that affects still more strongly poor persons and is one that lies at the root of all reform which it is hoped to effect in regard to the land of this country. But while that is the main and large object I have in view, the approach I venture to make to it on this occasion, by the measure I now ask the House to read a second time, is of a very humble and limited character. The Bill I have brought in applies only to Scotland, and it would be impossible to extend it to England under present conditions, because England does not possess the machinery and arrangements which exist in Scotland, and which make it possible to proceed in Scotland on the lines which the Bill suggests. In Scotland, as in England, there have been for a good many years past a great many changes tending towards the simplification of conveyancing. These have been chiefly in the direction of lopping off unnecessary and tortuous stages of the process of the transfer of land, and partly, to a great extent, in lopping off superfluous phrases in the deeds by which that transfer is effected. There have been Acts passed for shortening the language used, and though these Acts in Scotland have been of a voluntary character, yet they have been accepted in Scotland by the Profession, and acted upon almost, I might say, universally, on their being first brought forward. But whilst we have done a great deal in this direction, there is still considerable difficulty and considerable complexity in the process of the transfer of land, and that arises chiefly from the fact of the language in which the description of the land is couched—the language which is in England called the "parcels," or the statement of the exact part and portion of the land that is the subject of transfer. Now, in Scotland the description is, perhaps, carried back to a degree which exceeds anything existing in England. It is quite common in the conveyances of Scotland to find that you draw back the description of the land to some events that took place 500 years ago. If I were to read to the House some of these descriptions it would weary hon. Members. I will not trouble them; but I merely mention the fact—thoroughly well known to Scotsmen—for the information of English Members. There are many conveyances which carry back the description to the survey and assessment and revaluation which was made in the Reign of Alexander II.—before the days of Bruce and Wallace; and if we wish to come down later than that we add to the description of the pieces of land the conditions under which they were held at the time the last transfer took place. If it has not happened that they have been transferred—which is common enough—for 50 or 100 years back, then we are told in these conveyances that the lands are such as were possessed by an individual whose name is now entirely forgotten, and are bounded on the north by the lands of another individual, who is also equally forgotten, and similarly on the south, east, and west. Therefore, when you come to deal with the sale of such lands you are obliged to throw aside as utterly useless all those legal descriptions of the land which you find in the title deeds. To find what is actually transferred you are obliged to come to the land itself and inquire what is the property which the person who is going to sell is in possession of. You have to get someone to show you the limits of the land—to show you what it is the owner is in possesion of, by himself or his tenant and what is the subject to which this elaborate and ancient language of title deeds applies. I admit, of course, that in some perfectly modern conveyances in regard to land in towns, or in the immediate neighbourhood of towns, which is very valuable, you find the subject described otherwise—by so many feet stretching along such a street at right angles with such another street, and so on. These are the most accurate and clear descriptions of modern times; but they are not the kind of description which is given to the bulk of the land in the country which passes by conveyance. In dealing with property under such titles as these it is absolutely necessary to employ lawyers, for none but lawyers can trace out these ancient title deeds; and they have to employ other persons to identify the lands and see whether they correspond with the language of the ancient form of the title deeds. This is the cause of much expense and complexity; and the probability is that, when the transfer is completed, no none but a lawyer is able to comprehend it. I venture to think that instead of endeavouring to apply these ancient descriptions to the present state of the land, we should try and identify estates by their present actual state; and that we are able to do in Scotland in a way that is not possible in England. The Motion which has been discussed to-night on the subject of the valuation of real property points to the adoption of machinery for England which we have in Scotland. We have in Scotland a County Valuation; and in the Valuation Book we have a description not only of every separate estate, but of every separate possession. There is a separate entry for every property held by every different occupier. There is more than that in Scotland. Local taxation there was originally levied on the owners alone, and not on the occupiers at all; and, though it has been partially extended to occupiers, still the owner is the person chiefly responsible. The person most fully burdened is the person it is most important to find out and state accurately. Well, for this reason it is the case that the owner is entered in the first column of the Valuation Roll of Scotland, which, for the information of English Members, I will translate into "Rate Book;" the second column gives the name of the tenant; the third the occupier, who may be under the tenant; and the fourth the annual value, to be fixed by an officer appointed by the county who is generally Surveyor of Taxes also. Thus we have on the Register, in every county and in every burgh in Scotland, a statement of the actual state of ownership and of possession of every inch of land. I propose to take that Register as the basis of land ownership, and to provide that it shall be in the power of every person who desires to sell and every person who desires to buy a property so entered to effect their purpose by simply substituting the name of the purchaser for the name of the seller in the Book, so that the name of the purchaser being so substituted for the name of the seller will give him the same legal rights as the seller possessed. I venture to say that nothing can be more simple, comprehensive, or complete. By the means I propose you will have whatever property belonged to the seller transferred just as it is, complete, with all its rights and appurtenances, to the purchaser. I do not profess to do more. I do not profess to meet the desire which some sellers have of laying down conditions, reserving certain rights for their benefit; but in the great majority of cases in which it is desired to transfer the whole right of a subject from one possessor to another possessor, the system I have drawn up in this Bill is capable of taking effect completely. There are precautions to be taken. In order that there may be no fear whatsoever that there will be any flaw or error in the transaction as to the persons who are parties to the sale, I propose to take two precautions. In the first place, the seller will make an application for a form. The assessor will transmit it in a registered letter addressed to the person who is registered as the possessor; therefore, it will only reach the hand of the true owner. The true owner when he receives that form will fill it up, sign it, and send it back to the assessor to be entered in the Transfer Book, which the assessor is to keep. But I provide in the Bill that the conveyance in this way shall convey only the right of the person who signs the transfer; and, consequently, if by any chance a person signs the transfer who is not the true owner, it will carry nothing away from him. It will be merely a piece of waste paper, and will not affect the rights of the true owner, so long as it is not signed by him. That places no difficulty in the way of a *bonâ fide* transaction, because the purchaser will only purchase from the person he knows to be the true owner. He will receive the rights of the true owner which will be sufficient for him. This system will absolutely prevent the true owner from suffering from any perjury or duplicity whatsoever. In Scotland we have another admirable institution that does not generally exist in England, and that is a Register of Deeds which has been in full operation for 300 years. Now, that Register of Deeds has an advantage which is not enjoyed under the local Registries in England. It has the advantage that, according to the law of Scotland, the Register is accessible to the public; it is notice to all the world, and no deed can take effect until it is registered. In order to secure to this new method of conveyance all the advantages which belong to this form of Register, I propose that the assessor—the public officer to whom the transfer has been sent—shall, after entering the transfer on his own local Valuation Book, transmit it to the Sasine Office in Edinburgh, where it will be registered, and this will have all the effects of infetment on a disposition. The Keeper of the Register of Sasines in Edinburgh, on receiving the transfer, will deal with it exactly as he does with conveyances sent at present, entering it in the proper Register, under the head of the property to which it refers, and under the name of the owner who appears in the index. Everything will be done with these new conveyances which is done with the old ones. In this simpler method we obtain all the securities and advantages of the existing system, with this great advantage added—that it can be carried into effect by common, plain, persons who understand each other, without the necessity of lawyers at all. It would be possible, under this Bill, for two ordinary persons to effect a transfer without other assistance than that of their own plain common sense. We know what is the experience of the Registers at present. We know what sums are necessary to enable the Government to maintain these Registers; and so far as the State charges are concerned, the payment for a transfer will not be greater than it is at present. There is a profit out of the Register of Sasines in Edinburgh, and I propose in Committee on the Bill to move certain words which will fix the cost of transfer at rates which will be sufficient to pay the whole expense, and which will not be more than the sum for which we can transfer stocks, or shares, or ships—namely, about 2*s.* 6*d.* per cent. There are some details in the process I propose which I fully admit will be proper subjects for consideration in Committee, if the Bill should be permitted to reach the Committee stage. There is the question as to the method of transferring portions of property. I have sketched out a method of doing that. It is suggested that it is not complete; but I would point out that it admits of amendment. I will not, at this stage, refer to the manner in which the difficulty may be overcome; but will merely remind hon. Gentlemen that the difficulty applies to only a small part of the measure, and is one which may easily be removed by a slight adjustment of the language used in the drafting. I will not detain the House longer by entering upon a full explanation of the details of the Bill. I frankly admit that the principle is new as applied to land; but it will apply to land those principles with which we are so familiar as applied to property in stocks and shares and to property in ships. Speaking as a lawyer, I do not see that there is any real difficulty in applying these same principles to land. The difficulty has always been said to lie in the fact that whereas stocks and shares are of a somewhat specific character, or are, at all events, capable of being exactly defined, land is more difficult to define. But I venture to say that, in this Bill, by using the Registers that are existing, I have provided a means of making the definition as clear and specific in the one case as the other. The result of the Bill will simply be that in the cases to which it will apply—for I have not said it will be applicable in all cases—it will open to purchasers an easy and inexpensive method of obtaining a transfer. If they are not satisfied with the method, they can resort to the old one. It is optional, and not compulsory; but I am sure that, in spite of its optional character, if it passes there are a large number of persons who will avail themselves of it. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Boyd-Kinnear.*)

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I am sure that all of us will heartily sympathize with the hon. and learned Gentleman in the object he has in view in introducing his measure. He has rightly said that the titles to land in Scotland have been greatly simplified in recent years, and I sincerely hope and firmly believe that that process of simplification is not at an end. While it is true that a great deal has been done, still the landlords and tenants in Scotland are satisfied that many improvements tending to simplify titles to land may be effected. But I am afraid that anyone who is familar with Scottish titles to land, and the practice of dealing with Scottish land by way of sale and incumbrance or otherwise, must feel that this Bill does not afford a practical or feasible method of accomplishing the object its authors have in view. I think the first essential object of every system of land transfer must be reasonable certainty and security of title. You must know what the subject you are dealing with is, and you must see on what footing the title stands. The hon. and learned Gentleman is quite right in saying that for that purpose we have in Scotland, besides the system of conveyancing or transfer, that of registration, not the same as that in England, but which, having many common features, has one thing which does not exist in England which we regard as of great value. We have in Scotland a system of registration by which after the conveyance has been made it is put on record. This record is a public record or register which is accessable to everyone, whether it be an intending purchaser or a lender, or a person having any other interest in the land, and thus you have an element of certainty in the title. But what is the proposal of this Bill? It is to substitute for a conveyance containing a description of the subject—not an unnecessarily long description, but just enough to identify the subject—one which need not contain any such description at all, and might not be an identification. We have, both by statute and custom, enormously curtailed our description; and I venture to say that the descriptions that are in Scotch conveyances are no longer than is necessary to identify the subject; at any rate, if they are not it is bad conveyancing, and it needs no Act of Parliament to rectify the evil. The object of the description can only be to make it clear what the subject is. But what is the proposal of my hon. and learned Friend? He proposes that the conveyance should not contain any description at all; he proposes to use what is called a Register, but which I, with great respect, say is not a Register at all. He proposes the Valuation Roll for the purpose of identifying the subject. I do not intend to go into a wrangle on the subject of Scotch conveyancing; but I should like the House to know exactly what that means. This Valuation Roll is the Roll on which all the local rates are charged, and the entries vary from year to year, the object of the Roll being to bring out a money sum so that the person who has to collect the rates will know what sum to charge the ratepayer. But these varying entries do not discriminate between different subjects, and the record is not a permanent one, but is made up every year. What my hon. and learned Friend proposes to do is to say—"I will not give you a description which will enable you to identify the subject, but a Roll giving the names of the proprietor, occupier, and subject, which is prepared to bring out the value of the subject for the purpose of laying on the rate." If you desire to get at the identification of the subject you will require to go behind the Valuation Roll to the Register and examine the man's title; so that the Bill, so far from being a simplification of transfer, would be the reverse. It would drive you back to the description on the Register, which it would be a very easy thing to go to now, when the Bill is new; but I do not know what would happen if this system of conveyancing went on for 10, 20, or 30 years, and you ceased to have any description at all. But my hon. and learned Friend proposes to have recourse to the real Register after all. He proposes, in the first place, to have this Register, which is not a Register at all, but a Rate Book, and then to put the entry in the Rate Book on to the true Register. I have explained what the object of the true Register is. It is to enable everyone to see how the true title stands, and what the subject is. What will be the value of the Rate Book after the transfer to the Register? The value of the Rate Book would be totally inappropriate to that Register. Not only would this be a bad system of getting the description into the conveyance, but it would destroy the utility of the Register we have already. There are many other objections to be taken to the Bill as it stands, and I should have to apologize for wearying the House if I went into them. I do not see how it could be possible that there could be, not only security, but intelligibility, in any title framed on this system—at all events, for any length of time. I quite understand this—that if we were dealing with a new country like Australia, or portions of the United States of America, where you have the land drawn out in numbered lots, you could find all you wanted by consulting an authoritative Government map, and would be able to dispense with descriptions of the subject; but in an old settled country, where land has become of great value, especially near towns, where descriptions run into yards, feet, and inches, until it is of great monetary importance to know exactly what the subject is—such a description will not do. Now, even if these objections were not valid—and they seem to me to be unanswerable to anyone who knows anything about Scotch titles—I would point out that if the provisions of the Bill are valid in regard to properties transferred as they stand and without sub-division, what is to be the case when you propose to sub-divide properties? It is all very well if you can find out what the subject is; but my hon. and learned Friend, no doubt, felt that the system would not do in its original form, except in conveying something which had already got a definite "local habitation and a name," so to speak. He felt there would be some difficulty in dealing with the case of selling off pieces of an estate. What is his proposal in Clause 8? It is that the proprietor or his agent shall meet the assessor on the ground to

> "fill up the transfer with such description of the parts of the subjects to be transferred as he shall deem sufficient for identification,"

and so on. It is assumed that when a person wishes to sell or convey a part of the subject he can still do without a professional description, and that conveyancing will disappear—that you are to do without the professional gentleman in the person of the lawyer, just as some people would do without the services of the doctor or the clergyman — perhaps not the clergyman. No doubt, this would be a very desirable thing if it could be done; but the proprietor is to call in the assessor — a gentleman whose business is not to frame descriptions of the subject, but to put a value on it for purposes of rating. It would seem as though the adjustment, being effected by a public officer, were taking place in the public interest. But who is he to adjust the matter with? He cannot adjust it with himself, and he has no antagonist or opponent to deal with. Apparently this is to be the invocation of a public officer to adjust with a man himself the description of his own property. What would be the validity of that against a neighbour or anybody else? If a man is only acting with himself, let him make the adjustment himself—he does not want the assistance of the assessor or anybody else, and the adjustment could not be more invalid. I would point out that the assessor is not an official chosen or appropriate for such a purpose as this. He is chosen because he is a man who knows the letting value of land; and he goes about with a book filling up the Roll, upon which the rates are levied, and discharging a function altogether inappropriate to the character of the work which would have to be done under this Bill. I leave it to the House, and to anyone who knows anything about this subject and can appreciate the importance of a title, whether it is possible that the method proposed could have any practical value or useful purpose. The hon. and learned Gentleman says the measure would not render his system of conveyancing universal or compulsory, and that the old system would be retained; but that would only lead to additional confusion, the proper course for amendment of the Law of Conveyancing to take being in the direction of simplifying descriptions of the subject, and bringing about brevity in the language used. I venture to think that whilst my hon. and learned Friend deserves the thanks of the House for some of the suggestions he has made, which may lead to something, the Bill, as it stands, would not be available or practicable as a Conveyancing Bill at all. I do not see how it could be made useful in Committee—if I did I should have the greatest possible pleasure in assenting to the second reading. I do not see how, in any form or shape, the objections I have pointed out could be met; therefore, I put it to my hon. and learned Friend whether he thinks it necessary to press a Bill which is open to such very grave objections?

MR. GREGORY (Sussex, East Grinstead): Some years ago I sat on a Select Committee which took a great deal of evidence on the subject of conveyancing in Scotland. I remember the experience we gained on that Committee excited such considerable admiration on the part of some of us for the system which prevailed in Scotland, that we were anxious to see it carried into effect in England. When we had to consider a Bill for the improvement of the Registry in Yorkshire, we incorporated into it, so far as we could, the Scotch system, in the hope that it would be introduced generally throughout England. I do not think you can have anything very much better than the Scotch system of conveyancing; and I do not think any hon. Member from Scotland does well when he introduces a measure to interfere with a system which has worked so well, and which is so well adapted to the country. The Bill is against the operation of the existing system, because it introduces a new element into the registration. It would make the Rate Book govern the Register, instead of the Register govern the Rate Book. Anybody on the Rate Book would have the right to make a conveyance under the Bill and transmit it to the Registrar. But what evidence of title does the Rate Book contain? It is merely for the purpose of the assessment of the property, and does not profess to be in any way a register of title. Again, all that a person could convey would be such an interest as he happened to have in the property, and a purchaser might find that this was merely a tenancy for life, or that it was subject to charges and incumbrances of all kinds—in fact, that he got little or nothing for his money. I must say it goes to my heart to have to oppose a Bill which its framers believe will have the effect of dispensing with the services of us—the lawyers, for such measures always bring us new clients. The best customers we have are those who make their own wills; their relatives come to us afterwards. So would it be with those who do their own conveyancing; they or their descendants would come to us to put right their work, and we should have all the benefit of the consequent litigation, instead of the small profit on the original transfer.

Mr. WILL (Montrose, &c.): I agree with the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate that the thanks of the House are due to the hon. and learned Member who has moved the second reading of the Bill; and I hope that good results will attend his efforts, and that the attention of the Lord Advocate will be directed to this very pressing matter. There is less excuse for delay in amending the law in Scotland than in England, for the very simple reason that in Scotland there already exists, in perfect working order, all the machinery that is necessary for the purpose of recording, registering, and preserving title to property. The Lord Advocates of Scotland, whether belonging to one Party or the other, have not neglected the subject of the simplification of title. I know the efforts of 1868, and how, by the Act of that year, no less than 11 Acts of Parliament were either totally repealed or repealed in part, and that titles were very much simplified. I also know how in that year another Act of Parliament was passed, collecting, so to speak, the Registers into one, doing away with the County Registers, making one Central Register. But this only shows how much easier it is for Scotland to deal with this question of titles. The main defect pointed out in the Bill of the hon. and learned Gentleman is that it does not provide for a description of the property, which is, after all, the difficulty in the matter, because there is no difficulty whatever in transferring property as easily as a share in a ship, or a table, or anything else, if the particular property can be described. It seems to me the hon. and learned Member's proposal could be simplified in this way. It is true that the assessor does not have in his Valuation Roll or Rate Book the boundaries of the property and the names of the persons who occupy the contiguous property; but he is generally a gentleman accustomed to the making of plans, and if the transfers were accompanied by plans, that would be an improvement which might very well be adopted, as it has been with advantage in other countries. Whatever may be the result of this Bill, I trust that the matter, having been brought forward, will lead to further consideration; and that ultimately a Bill will be introduced dealing with the further simplification of titles in Scotland.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth): It is not necessary to trouble the House with many observations after what has fallen from the Lord Advocate; but as the Motion that the Bill be read a second time this day six months stands in my name, I beg to offer some observations upon what has passed, particularly as to what has fallen from the last speaker, as to the Rate Book official making plans. The official referred to may not be a person accustomed to the making of plans. He may never have seen one in his life; he may know nothing about the ownership of property or about the disposition of it, and yet he may have imposed upon him, in addition to the simple duty he already performs of preparing the Valuation Roll for the purpose of levying a rate, the duty of ascertaining the ownership, the exact boundary, the rights and incidents of all the property of all the owners, or reputed owners, or persons who assert themselves to be owners, and desire to be put upon the Valuation Roll, in the district. That would be a task so prodigious as to utterly prevent the performance of his ordinary duties. I never heard of a Rate Book being accompanied by plans either in this or any other country, and I have travelled in a great many. I should have come across them if they had existed. But what is the object of this Bill? The scope of the measure—if I understand it aright—is this. The hon. and learned Gentleman who brings it in finds existing in Scotland what is considered a perfect system of registration of conveyances —for the information of lay persons I will use the word "transfers." Transfers from A to B, and from B to C, and from C to D, are entered as they occur in this Register. I could conceive, if the proposition were that a simple entry on this Register should in future be substituted for a deed of conveyance, and simply refer to the deed of conveyance that last occurred on the Register, and the purchaser wishes to have a much more simple conveyance than he would get if he went to his lawyer to have a formal deed of conveyance prepared—I can conceive that it would be much more simple for him to apply the machinery of this Bill to this Register, so that the Registrar of Deeds could have before him Mr. Q and Mr. R, the former to say—"I wish to transfer the particular property described in the last conveyance on the Register to me to Mr. R." It would be a simple process before the Registrar for Q to have an entry in the Register made so as to convey to R all that had been conveyed to him by P. But what does the hon. and learned Gentleman do? He makes the Rate Book the basis of the transaction—a book prepared for another purpose by an accountant. The assessor will have an entry in his Rate Book, "John Smith" —or, as we are speaking of Scotland, I will say "Donald Cameron"—as the reputed owner in possession, without any description of the property transferred beyond its name, say, "Whiteacre." The acreage of the land is perhaps stated, but not its boundaries—only the annual value, which is required for the purpose of rating the reputed owner—it may possibly be only the owner for life, and very often is only the owner for life—and upon that evidence a document is to be prepared transferring "Whiteacre" from "Donald Cameron." That document has to go to be recorded by the Registrar of Deeds, who is not concerned to see whether "Donald Cameron" was the last man on his Register or not in respect of "Whiteacre," or whether "Whiteacre" is the property comprised by the description in the last registered title document or not, so that the purchaser starts a new title on the Register. The question would arise in the mind of any subsequent purchaser whether "Whiteacre" was really the property that "Cameron" possessed, and he would have to go through the long process which he would have done if the old system had been adopted. He would have the additional difficulty put on him that if many years had elapsed the purchaser and his advisers would have to examine the land, and likely enough take oral testimony as to whether in 1886 the property to be purchased was the property which passed by the last registered deed to "Cameron." That is not all. My experience is this —that not one transaction in real property in 100 is simply between A and B, or B and C, and of such a simple description as to be conveyed in a stereotyped form. In testimony of that I may point to several Acts that have been passed from time to time in both countries for the simplification of conveyance. Why have they not been availed of by the public? It may be answered—"Because the interest of the Legal Profession is against them." But I deny that. The reason is, they do not adapt themselves to more than one case in 100, and because there are modifications in the covenants—provisions containing reservations, and so on —all of which have to be provided for by special definitions. As the Lord Advocate pointed out, this is not a Bill which can be made into a good working Bill in Committee; otherwise I have so much sympathy with the object of the hon. and learned Member, which is to bring about a simplification of transfer, as would induce me to say that I would vote for the second reading. But there are two clauses in the Bill not only mutually destructive to themselves, but, dynamite-like, they explode the whole

Bill. The person who buys from "Donald Cameron" will only acquire from him such rights as he had; but there may have been none. The hon. and learned Gentleman says in Clause 11—

"But such transfer shall only convey such right as may legally pass under the testamentary disposition on which it is founded."

What is he obliged to do to make a basis of future title? Why, in the very next clause he would enact—

"A transfer duly made and recorded in the Register of Sasines under this Act shall be deemed to form a title on which the positive prescription may run to the same effect as if such transfer had been a charter followed by sasine."

That is to say, it is called a transfer, though he has said it

"shall only convey such right as may legally pass under the testamentary disposition on which it is founded,"

which may be no right at all; and yet when it is put on record on the Register of Deeds it shall constitute a title, and shall be as good

"as if such transfer had been a charter followed by sasine."

These two things are utterly inconsistent. For these reasons I object to the Bill.

Mr. MASON (Lanark, Mid): I rise to support the second reading of the Bill, my name being on the back of it. It contains a simple remedy for the present inconveniences of registration. Perhaps it is too simple for many of those who have spoken since I entered the House. There can be no question that the proposals which are made in the Bill will reduce the fees of a considerable number of those who have spoken against the measure, and I suppose that goes a long way towards the objections that have been raised. The simplicity of the Bill is too apparent for many who are interested in drawing out for us long lawyers' deeds for the possession of property, which, in my travels over the world, I have found quite unnecessary elsewhere. It seems to me that the idea which this Bill embodies is to give a good title, or, at all events, to give the same title to the new proprietor—to the gentleman who buys the property—as that possessed by his predecessor; or, in other words, that the party willing to buy enters into the possession of the former proprietor, or, as we should say in Scotland, simply goes into his shoes. If the purchaser chooses to take that responsibility, whatever are the encumbrances on the property or the defects of its title, that is a matter for him entirely. If he holds the property by having bought it and paid for it, surely he is to be at liberty to enter into possession; and if exchange can be accomplished on much more economical terms than we are accustomed to, I think that would be to the advantage of the general community, and the main body of those who are engaged in buying and selling heritable property. That is the main feature of the Bill. We wish to make heritable property as easily transferable as other property, and we see no reason why its conveyance should be so hedged by lawyers' phrases and words which seem unnecessary, and which we are willing to dispense with. The fees payable in Scotland are not less than ½ per cent on all the property exchanged. There will be a considerable saving by the introduction of this plan to the community at large. I believe that the Representatives of the Legal Profession are unnecessarily alarmed, because the probability is that 10 or 20 times the amount of property will change hands which does now, and that it will be done more simply and cheaply than it is at present. People now are terrified at the long processes they have to go through to get property transferred; therefore I think that the Lord Advocate has acted unwisely with regard to the position he has taken up in regard to this Bill. I do not think that any of the objections which have been urged against the measure can be justified; and I think I am fortified in the position I assume when it is considered that the Convention of Royal and Parliamentary Burghs have sent a Petition to Parliament in favour of the Bill, a fact which should go a long way towards calming the fears of the English Members. I am quite sure, having regard to the common sense of the people of Scotland, that the provisions of the Bill now before the House will very shortly become the law of the land. I trust, while we do not go in for Home Rule, that we shall by-and-bye come to consider why we may not have a little more of Home Rule than we now possess; that we shall be guided by common sense in our affairs, and not entirely by those who are supposed to be the guides of public opinion. I have visited our Colonies, and found that a much cheaper and better system of the transfer of property in land existed there, and I see no reason why we should not take a lesson from them and adapt ourselves to the growing wisdom of the age. For these reasons, I hope that the House will assent to the Motion for the second reading of the Bill. There are, no doubt, differences of opinion in connection with some parts of the question; but the sponsors for the Bill are perfectly willing to consider them in Committee, and there, I hope, the Lord Advocate, with all his legal knowledge, will give us his assistance in perfecting the Bill.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): Sir, the hon. and learned Member who moved the second reading of this Bill has made the usual stereotyped attack against the *bona fides* of lawyers. I am sure that the hon. and learned Gentleman uses the expressions I refer to in a Pickwickian sense; but it seems to me that he forgets that if there is any part of the Legal Profession which has no anxiety to make transfers of property indisputable, it is that represented by the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite. With regard to the Colonial system alluded to by the hon. Member who has just spoken, I can conceive that there might have been much more ground for what the hon. Member said if he had supplied us with a Bill shadowing out what is done under the Colonial system and the way in which they prove their titles there. There are many Members who may not be so intimate with the system; and I say that if it be so sufficient, so good, and so admirably suited to this country, where properties are divided into small and curious proportions and shapes—if it be so applicable to the condition of things here—it is a great pity that it is not embodied in this Bill. The hon. Member said that, in his opinion, the Government should assent to the principle of the Bill and allow the matter to be threshed out in Committee; but the fact is, there is nothing in the Bill which admits of being threshed out in Committee. It is a proposal for using a book, which in Scotland is useful for one purpose only, for a purpose for which, in its inception and in the mode of its employment, makes it absolutely unsuitable. I am convinced that the great mass of Scotchmen will not readily assent to the proposition that they are safe in taking a title of land which consists simply of an entry on the Valuation Roll, and that the description of the property in the Valuation Roll is sufficient. As evidence of the unsuitability any entry in the Valuation Roll is for the purpose of giving any person a title to land by a mere reference to it, we have only to look to the use to which Valuation Rolls may be put in our Courts of Law. The object of the Valuation Roll is to fix the value of property, and to enter some person from whom to get payment of the rates; but so clear is it that the Roll is only for fixing value and nothing else, that it is no evidence of proprietorship in a Court of Law; and yet you are now proposing that the Valuation Roll shall be sufficient evidence to satisfy a person in taking over property. Our Registration Acts for the purpose of Parliamentary franchise make use of the Valuation Roll; but so clear was it to the Legislature when these Acts were passed that it would be futile to use it as evidence of ownership of the subject, that in the Registration Acts for the purpose of the franchise it is expressly declared that the Valuation Roll shall be evidence of value and of nothing else—that is to say, that when the question is whether A B shall be placed on the Register, the fact that the property is of a certain value shall be proved by the Roll; but that whether A B is owner or occupier of the subject cannot be decided by the Valuation Roll. In other words, while the value of the subject is taken from the Roll, evidence to prove ownership has to be taken from other sources. Evidence has been given in many cases proving that the proprietor entered in the Valuation Roll was not the true proprietor at all, which shows that for the purpose intended by the Bill—namely, the transfer of land—the Valuation Roll is absolutely useless. From what I have shown, I think it must be plain to the House that it would be absurd to base a system of title of land on such a document as the Valuation Roll of a county, or to suppose that it would, in the hands of any surveyor or assessor, make up a title satisfactory to the parties concerned. I am of opinion that the transfer of land should be simplified only in the sense in which it can be of real value to the people—namely, by insuring that there shall be no difficulty or dispute about title after the transfer has taken place. But for that purpose the Bill would not be of the slightest use, inasmuch as it will only provide work for lawyers. I think, therefore, that the course taken by my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate with regard to the Bill is essentially the right one for the House to follow.

MR. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): Sir, I think it would be a great pity if any disposition were shown in this House to throw cold water, so to speak, upon any proposal which had for its object the simplification of the transfer of land. I venture to think, however, so far as relates to the present discussion, that that is by no means the case. As the Lord Advocate has pointed out, the simplification of deeds has already been largely carried out, and where the transfer of land is not now less costly I think that the cause must be one of two things. In the first place, the transfer may not be a simple transfer of the subject from the vendor to the purchaser; it may be, and very often is, complicated by conditions of various kinds, modifying the rights of the persons having interest in the property, or creating new rights and interests. That is a serious and a natural source of expense. But the plan which the hon. and learned Member for Fife (Mr. Boyd-Kinnear) has proposed to the House does not apply to that class at all; it is only applicable and can only be applied, as he has explained, to simple transfers. The other cause of expense is where the investigation of title is long and complicated. In the case of simple transfer our present form of conveyancing gives a complete remedy—that is to say, a reference to the last description of the subject on the Register. But, instead of that, the hon. and learned Member proposes that, instead of reference to deeds already on the Register, a method which supplies a complete and satisfactory description of the subject, he makes reference to the Valuation Roll, which, as it has been pointed out, affords no means of identification whatever. The entry in the Rate Book is a statement of value only; it is not a statement of ownership; and if you want to ascertain who are the owners of property you must go behind the Valuation Roll—that is to say, to the deeds. The argument which I submit to the House is that a much better means is already provided by the law than the hon. and learned Member offers—namely, recourse to the last description of the subject on the Register; and, as I have pointed out, conveyance of that kind is no more costly than the means which he proposes. If a purchaser desires to be his own lawyer, it is as easy for him to avail himself of the simple form provided for him by the present Statutes as it would be under this Bill. I venture to think that this is a proposal which will not commend itself to the House, and I consider that the grounds of objection to the Motion before the House stated by the Lord Advocate are entirely conclusive.

Question put, and *negatived.*

CHARITIES, &C. (EXEMPTION FROM LOCAL RATES) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Julian Goldsmid, Bill to exempt Charities and Hospitals from Local Rates, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir Julian Goldsmid, Mr. Baggallay, Mr. Octavius Morgan, Sir Robert Fowler, Baron F. de Rothschild, Sir Algernon Borthwick, and Mr. H. W. Lawson.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 210.]

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (RETURNING OFFICERS) ACT (1875) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. T. M. Healy, Bill to make better provision for appeals from judgments of County Courts under the provisions of "The Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers) Act, 1875," *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. T. M. Healy and Mr. Chance.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 211.]

RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC [EXPENSES, &C.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of the Expenses of the Railway Commissioners caused by the holding of local sittings; of the remuneration of assessors, and of persons employed for the consideration of complaints against Railway Companies, in pursuance of any Act of the present Session for the better regulation of Railway and Canal Traffic.

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow.*

House adjourned at a quarter before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 12*th May,* 1886.

MINUTES.]—SELECT COMMITTEES — National Provident Insurance, Mr. Llewellyn and Mr. Wason *added;* Forestry, *nominated.*

PUBLIC BILLS — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — Stipendiary Magistrates (Pensions) * [212].

Second Reading—Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers' Expenses) (Ireland) [8]; Compulsory Purchase of Land Compensation [145]; Beer Adulteration (No. 3) [66].

Committee—Church Patronage [4], *debate adjourned;* Returning Officers' Charges (Scotland) [188]—R.P.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS—*Report*—Commons Regulation (Stoke) * [164]; Commons Regulation and Inclosure (Totternhoe) * [166]; Local Government * [173]; Local Government (No. 2) * [174]; Local Government (Poor Law) * [172]; Local Government (Poor Law (No. 2) * [175]; Local Government (Poor Law) (No. 3) * [176]; Local Government (Poor Law) (No. 4) * [177]; Local Government (Poor Law) : (No. 5) * [178]; Local Government (Poor Law) (No. 6 * [179].

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (RETURNING OFFICERS' EXPENSES) (IRELAND) BILL.—[BILL 8.]

(*Mr. Tuite, Mr. Chance, Mr. Timothy Harrington, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. Alexander Blane.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. TUITE (Westmeath, N.), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, the conduct of Returning Officers at the last General Election had so far influenced public opinion as to the necessity of amending the law relating to the scale of charges allowed to these officials that it was quite unnecessary for him to plead any justification for the introduction of the Bill. No doubt, Sheriffs looked upon a General Election as a sort of golden harvest, or a Heaven-sent opportunity which permitted them to fleece the unfortunate candidates who had the courage to offer themselves for Parliamentary honours. The Corrupt Practices Act had done a good deal to purify the conduct of elections in Ireland; but he maintained that the Schedule of Returning Officers' charges attached to the Act of 1875, was a blot on the Statute Book, inasmuch as it allowed too large a margin for the charges which Returning Officers were entitled to receive at Parliamentary Elections. In every case at the recent Election in Ireland the Sheriffs asked for the full amounts which the Schedule authorized them to charge. In almost every instance where it was possible to do so the Returning Officers employed their own friends, and had solicitors and agents at every polling station where there were 300 or 400 electors. At one place in Kilkenny, where the number of electors on the Register was only 327, the Returning Officer had two polling booths, at each of which a solicitor was stationed. One booth was provided with a solicitor and two clerks; the other with a solicitor and a clerk. Such a state of things ought not to be allowed to exist. So long as it was tolerated the representation in that House could not be in any degree perfect, inasmuch as the poor man was prevented from attempting to contest a seat in Parliament. The Returning Officers, knowing that in many cases their accounts would not bear scrutiny, struck off 50 per cent; but notwithstanding this the accounts were far too high. For example, £3 3*s.* was charged for the erection of polling booths. He was satisfied from personal inspection that they could not have cost more than 5*s.* each. The fact was that these Schedules of charges belonged to the bygone days when the longest purse won the battle. That condition of things no longer existed; they were now living in democratic times. Parliament was in a large measure democratic in its character, and the cost of entering the House should be made democratic and popularized. It was absurd to have restrictions of this kind, their effect being to hinder any man who had a wish in this direction from aspiring to Parliamentary honours. The principal clause, the backbone of the Bill, was the clause which would prevent the recurrence of what he might call the fraudulent contests which had disgraced Ireland in the late Elections. Of 78 contests in Ireland 50 were of this character. They had been simply forced on the people for the purpose of putting the Nationalist candidate to needless expense. A glance at the Register would have shown those bogus candidates the futility of coming forward. In 21 of these contests the number of votes recorded for the so-called Loyalist candidate did not exceed 300, while the minimum number was 30. On the other hand, the number of votes recorded for the Nationalist candidate ranged from 1,330 to 7,300. In East Kerry the Conservative candidate polled 30 votes; the Nationalist candidate polled 3,169. In West Clare the Conservative candidate polled 289, the Nationalist 6,763. In nearly every case the Loyalist candidate did not venture to address the electors, nor to employ a representative at any of the polling stations. In his own constituency the work of the Loyalist candidate began and ended by his handing in the nomination paper to the Sheriff, the object being simply to put the Nationalist candidate to unnecessary expense. Elections would not be pure so long as this state of things was allowed to exist, and he hoped the provision made in the Bill to meet cases of this kind would be adopted by the House. It placed a penalty on the bogus candidate who wantonly came forward in order to put an opponent to unnecessary cost, and the constituency to the trouble and vexation of a contested election, when by consulting the Register it could easily be seen what the state of Parties was, and the probable chances of success. He trusted the House would accept the measure, and pass it by such a large majority as to insure its becoming law.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Tuite.*)

Colonel KING-HARMAN (Kent, Isle of Thanet) said, he agreed with the hon. Member that the 7th clause, on which the hon. Member so greatly relied, was undoubtedly the backbone of the Bill. It deserved the serious attention of the House, because it seemed to him to be calculated to deprive minorities of the right of expressing their opinions at the polling booths at all. It was an attempt to introduce an innovation which he hoped the House would guard itself from permitting to pass. It was perfectly true that in many of the elections in Ireland the numbers polled by the minority candidate were exceedingly small. They knew very well, however, by the number of voters who polled, taking the whole of the contests together, that the Nationalist candidates did not, as a matter of fact, poll one-half of the voters on the Register. This was proved by figures which were absolutely incontestable. Supposing, however, for the sake of argument, that many of the candidates who went to the poll were certain not to poll a large number of votes, was that any reason why the Loyalist portion of the inhabitants should not have an opportunity of expressing their opinions? It seemed to him that, bad as the system of intimidation and oppression prevalent in Irish elections was now, the passing of this clause penalizing the minority candidate would lead to greater intimidation and oppression in the future. At the last Election the Nationalist candidates affected to treat the minorities with great contempt. If it were a question, therefore, that the candidate who did not poll more than a certain number of votes should be liable to pay the expenses incurred, he put it to the House whether it was unlikely that intimidation would be brought to bear on the voters in order to swell the majority and to cause voters to stay away from supporting the minority candidate. The scale of charges in the Bill seemed to him to have been proposed in a somewhat harum-scarum fashion. For instance, the hon. Member said that £3 3*s*. was too much to pay for polling booths; but the Schedule of his Bill allowed £4 4*s*. Comparing these charges with those in the Bill of the Government relating to elections in Scotland, he found that the Government allowed £7 7*s*. for the same object. The hon. Member spoke of candidates having the courage to offer themselves to the constituencies, and he desired that no candidate should present himself unless he was perfectly certain of obtaining a majority. The intention of that Bill evidently was to oppress and to snuff out the minority and prevent them from expressing their opinions. He begged, therefore, to move as an Amendment that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Colonel King-Harman.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.) said, he had no hesitation in saying that if that measure passed the expenses of elections would be reduced by about 35 per cent. The hon. and gallant Gentleman who had just sat down was anxious that the minority should have a chance of showing how many supporters it had. So were they; indeed, they would have been sorry if this Bill had been law last year, for then they should not, probably, have known how many supporters the so-called Loyalist minority had. He could assure the House that the Nationalist Party had been very much pleased last year to see the number of supporters which their opponents could bring to the poll at the elections in Ireland. In Kerry they polled 30 votes to the Nationalist candidates' 5,000. In South Mayo, 75 votes to the Nationalist's 4,900; in East Tipperary, 196 to the Nationalist's 4,064; in North Cork, 102 to the Nationalist's 4,982; and so it was all along the line. He would put this question to the hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet, who said that the Nationalist candidates did not represent one-half of the voters —If 5,000 voters represented less than half the voting population in a constituency, what proportion would 30 voters represent? That was an arithmetical calculation, which he would recommend to the consideration of the hon. and gallant Member. Under that Bill the expenses of election would be cut down so much that the amount which the unsuccessful candidate would pay would hardly be more than the share he had to pay now; while, on the other hand, he would be prevented from mulcting his successful opponent to the tune of some £400 or £500, merely in order to enable him to trot out his 60 or 70 voters. The hon. and gallant Member said it was proposed by the Bill that the candidate who failed should pay everything; but that was not the case. It was only the candidate who ignominiously failed who would have to do so. This Bill allowed every candidate to take his chance at the polls; but if a candidate who got 30 supporters as against 5,000 took his chance at the poll it was only reasonable that such a gentleman should pay for it. Therefore, the Bill provided that if a candidate only got half of the number polled by the successful candidate he would have to pay the whole cost of the election; but they would not have any objection if the House desired to reduce the proportion to one-third or one-fourth. Instead of preventing the constituencies from being properly contested, the Bill would compel elections to be so conducted that the real opinion of the constituencies would be shown by the result. He desired to call the attention of Liberal Members to the fact that this provision would have a very great effect in doing away with those three-cornered contests which did so much injury to the Liberal Party at the last General Election. He asked the House, and especially the Radical and Liberal portion of it, to support the general principle of the Bill; and when the measure got into Committee its promoters would be ready to listen to any reasonable proposal for the modification of its details.

MR. MACFARLANE (Argyll) said, he accepted the principle of the clause fining bogus candidates; but thought it would be rather hard to make a man pay the whole of the expenses unless he polled half as many votes as the successful candidate did. If one-third or one-quarter were substituted for one-half, the House might be disposed to assent to the proposal. A great many of them had had experience of bogus candidates, and he himself among the number; and if this Bill had been in operation, he should have had no expenses to pay for his election.

MR. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.) said, he wished that the principle of the Bill should apply to the whole of the United Kingdom, as many men in England had suffered from the want of explicitness in the law dealing with that question. He was of opinion that all the requirements of the case would be fully met if the proportion of voters entailing the cost of the election on an unsuccessful candidate were made, as had been suggested by the hon. Member for Argyllshire (Mr. Macfarlane), one-third instead of one-half as proposed by the Bill. He was of opinion that hon. Members sitting on the Ministerial side of the House ought to lend their aid to every attempt made to promote the purity of elections, because he was quite sure that the aim and desire of the electors generally was in that direction. Morever, it was well-known that electoral corruption did not generally proceed from the Liberal side, but was rather to be looked for on the part of those who belonged to the Conservative Party. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] Well, then, it usually came from the men who represented the money-bags. Therefore it was that he should do everything in his power in favour of any measure, the principle of which was the promotion of purity of election as well as the purity of the candidates themselves. No one in that House would be inclined to dispute the statement that the charges of the Sheriffs throughout the English divisions of the constituencies were made on a scale that left great room for improvement; and he should give his vote for the second reading of this measure in the hope that it would be made applicable to the United Kingdom generally.

Mr. T. D. SULLIVAN (Dublin, College Green) said, that the object of the Bill was to prevent sham candidates putting the constituencies to the expense, trouble, and delay of a contested election in cases in which they knew that they had not the slightest chance of being returned. An election ought to be a grave and a serious affair, instead of which, in many instances, it was an absolute farce. Such proceedings were an outrage on the constituencies. It was an insult to the community and to the constituencies that candidates should be put forward who had no chance of success, and who by such action put the honest and *bonâ fide* candidate to the trouble and expense of a contested election. In Ireland they had a good deal of that kind of thing—of these sham candidates polling a ridiculously small number of votes. Those who put themselves forward in such a position did no good either to themselves or their cause. They had only had the poor satisfaction of putting the National candidates and the National League to expense and trouble. In such a matter as an election of a Member to sit in that House such tricks, stratagems, and devices should not be permitted, and the matter ought to be so regulated as to be made a very serious thing for all concerned. After the last Election the Nationalists were naturally very much rejoiced at the results, seeing the large majorities they had secured. But what did they find? They found that a series of ingenious calculations were got up by the friends of the defeated candidates to show that, in reality, they were the victors and the Nationalists the defeated. All the dead and absent men were all calculated as having voted for the defeated candidates. They were told that intimidation had kept thousands away from the polls. Well, where was the intimidation, and how was it exercised, and were these gentlemen, so intimidated, the brave "Loyal minority" who were to line the ditches? Were these the brave, bold men who were buying Snider rifles? Why, the whole story of this intimidation was nonsense and humbug. It was a plea put forward and used simply to deceive people; but he had a very poor idea of the intellect and good sense of the people who could be deceived by such nonsense as the suggestion that men were intimidated from coming to the poll with the Ballot to guard them. If it was under the old system there might be some excuse for such suggestions; and yet here they found that the brave Loyal minority could not muster up courage enough to come to the poll and drop their ballot papers into the box. But let them look at the thing from the other point of view. If it was the "Loyal minority" who had secured the thousands at the poll and the Parnellites the hundreds, he would like to know would they not hear that the voice of the country had spoken most eloquently on their behalf? He did not think it needful to say very much on this subject, on the merits of which all were united. They all desired that elections to Parliament should be honest and *bonâ fide* transactions, and that no sham or bogus candidates should interfere for the mere purpose of worry, trouble, and annoyance. As to those men who did not secure one-half of the number of votes carried by their opponents, he thought the penalty proposed was too severe. They wanted to meet the case of men who knew in their hearts that they had no real chance in the election. That was perfectly fair, and the principle must commend itself to the good sense of every honest man. No one could object to it except those who meant to play again the game they played before, which he hoped would not receive the approbation of this House. They suffered more in Ireland than in England in this matter; but if the English Members wished to have a similar measure extended to

England they were perfectly ready to aid them.

MR. T. ROBINSON (Gloucester) said, he would have been pleased if a Bill had been introduced to put the subject of Returning Officers' expenses on a better footing for the entire Kingdom. This was not a Party question, and he would support the principle of the Bill.

MAJOR SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.) said, some reference had been made to intimidation during the recent elections in Ireland, and it had been charged against the Representatives of the Northern constituencies that they had spoken of the Loyal electors having been intimidated. He desired to state that neither he nor his Friends had ever said the Loyal minority had been intimidated. That minority required stronger measures to intimidate them than had yet been invented. What they had said was that there existed in Ireland an intimidation society, otherwise known by the name of the National League, and that that Society had succeeded in terrorizing and dominating the minds of those who were subjected to its sway in Ireland, the existence of that organization absolutely precluding the Irish people from expressing their deliberate opinions as to who should be their Representatives. He would simply instance the manner in which the candidates were chosen at the last Election in Ireland, and in doing so would mention the case of the hon. Member for West Clare. That hon. Gentleman was elected for the West Clare Division without, he believed, ever having seen the constituency. The Nationalist Party wanted to get hold of a representative Protestant, to show that at least some portion of the Protestants of Ireland sympathized with the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell); and, not being able to find one in Cork or Kerry, or Munster or Connaught, they were at least enabled to pounce upon him in Enniskillen. They brought their candidate from that place, and he was informed by a gentleman resident in Clare that he was never shown to the constituency until after the Election was over, when the hon. Member was produced — he (Major Saunderson) hoped to the satisfaction of the electors. This was what he called a bogus candidature. The Loyal Party undoubtedly undertook to fight some of the constituencies in the South and West of Ireland without much hope of success. This he did not for one moment attempt to deny; but he wished to say that what they wanted to do was this—they wanted to give an opportunity to the constituencies to record, if they chose to do so, their votes in favour of Loyalist candidates; and he might add that they wanted to do something more—they desired to show how many Irishmen would vote for the hon. Member for Cork; and, although they did not attempt to act so unfairly as to count those who abstained from voting at all as being on their own side—they had never made that assertion — they considered that they acted with perfect fairness in stating that those who abstained from voting did not record their votes for the hon. Member for Cork. He did not think that even the ingenuity of hon. Members below the Gangway would enable them to suggest that those abstainers really did vote for the hon. Member for Cork. The result was that more than 113,000 electors did not vote for the hon. Member for Cork at the last Election, and he thought this was something gained; while in the very City which that hon. Member represented there were no fewer than 7,000 abstainers from voting. Although he admitted that the Loyalist candidate for Cork did not get many votes, he, nevertheless, was of opinion that it was a point of considerable value to have shown, as they had thus been enabled to show to England and the rest of the United Kingdom, that in the very City which the hon. Member for Cork represented as the head of the Separatist Party, there were 7,000 electors who had refrained from recording their votes in his favour. It had been said that the backbone of the Bill before the House was the fine it would impose on the merely bogus candidates. On this point he might say that, in the constituency he represented, he had been opposed by the whole force of the Nationalist Party and the Radical Party; but he was enabled to beat his opponent by almost the proportion mentioned in the Bill as that which would impose the fine referred to. Still, he should be very sorry to enforce such a provision, even against a Nationalist, if that Nationalist wished, in the constituency which he had the honour to represent, to display his weakness. Every great cause which ultimately triumphed had a beginning. If they precluded any Englishman, Irishman, or Scotchman from advocacy of a cause which might become a great one at the beginning, when he was not likely to find many supporters, they would be taking away one of the greatest rights that could be claimed in either country—a right which he, for one, did not wish to deny to those who sat below the Gangway, nor to anyone else. He therefore hoped the House would pause before giving its sanction to such a measure as that now under discussion. It admitted what would be an absolutely new principle in Parliamentary elections, the adoption of which would have the effect of preventing an Englishman, Irishman, or Scotchman from coming forward to seek the representation of a constituency under the penalty of a heavy fine if he happened to be unsuccessful in polling the exact proportion of voters named in this Bill.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.) said, he was not one of those who were animated by an excessive desire to be severe on unsuccessful candidates, and he thought that the proposal in the Bill to place the burden of the expenses of election upon a candidate who polled less than one-half of the number of votes polled by the successful candidate was open to serious objection. He was, therefore, glad to hear from those who were in charge of the Bill that they did not insist upon this particular proposal, but were willing to modify it in Committee. He could not have supported the proposal as it stood, because he should be sorry to say that his opponent in East Aberdeenshire, who would have been mulcted under this Bill, was by any means a bogue candidate. He was an honourable candidate, who had a right to lay his principles before the constituency, although he had not a sufficient number of followers to save him from the penalties inflicted by this Bill. In principle, he (Mr. Esslemont) supported the Bill, because he thought that a fine—or, rather, the burden of the expenses—should fall upon candidates who were manifestly coming forward with no idea or expectation of anything else than simply to bring about a vexatious opposition, and inflict an unnecessary expense upon the popular candidate and upon the constituency. It was a great pity, on the other hand, that anyone should be restrained, under reasonable circumstances, from vindicating before a constituency the principles which he held. He ventured, therefore, to hope that the Bill would not be opposed in principle, but that it would be so amended in Committee as not to deter *bonâ fide* candidates from taking the field. The House was not met to discuss very much the unfortunate circumstances of those in Ireland who were not successful at the last Election, or to account for their want of success on any special principle. But they were all agreed that the expenses of elections ought to be minimized to the lowest possible scale, so as to secure that elections should be carried on in the interests of the country. As far as the expenses of elections were concerned, he should be inclined to go a good deal further than the proposals of this Bill. He saw no reason—so far, at least, as Scotland was concerned—why the Registrar of each parish should not take the poll, so that the expenses in each parish should not exceed £5. With such a simple system of ballot as they now had, there was no great necessity—and the law did not require it—that they should have legal assistance at great expense in every parish. The ballot ought to be so simple and so easily worked that it would require no great legal acumen to carry it out. He hoped that the official expenses connected with elections would not only be brought as low as they were fixed in the Schedule of this Bill, but that they might be made lower. He believed that the principle of the Bill was approved of on both sides of the House, and he hoped, therefore, that it would be agreed to without a division. If a division were taken, he should record his vote in favour of the Bill, on the assurance that those who brought it forward would accept in Committee the Amendments which had been foreshadowed in the debate.

Mr. JOHNS (Warwick, Nuneaton) said, the principle of the Bill was most admirable, and ought to be supported. It was not a question between Nationalists and Loyalists, but of doing away with bogus candidates. He hoped that this Bill was only a first instalment, and that the second instalment would be the application of the principle to England and Scotland. His idea was that the charges levied on the candidates should be upon a percentage system, and he would try to introduce this change in Committee.

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.) said, he strongly objected to the principle of this Bill. He objected to the principle of every Bill which was made applicable to Ireland alone. The state of things in Ireland would have been very different now if this pernicious plan had not been adopted of excluding Ireland from some Bills and passing other Bills for Ireland alone, and the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) never would have occupied the position he held in that House. All Bills should apply to England and Ireland alike. [Mr. T. D. SULLIVAN: What about coercion?] The Coercion Acts ought to have applied to the whole Kingdom. This was the main and the only principle on which he objected to the Bill before the House. With regard to the question of the Sheriffs' expenses, he felt sure that no Member of that House would object to a proposal by which they could be reduced; but he doubted whether the Bill under discussion would really effect the reduction it contemplated. In the first place, he thought the proposed reduction with regard to the cost of polling booths was a great mistake. They had already found the accommodation afforded by the polling booths insufficient. They found that a great many persons were crowded into small booths, and that the arrangements for marking the ballot papers were so bad that even educated men could hardly find room for the points of their pencils; while the rest of the arrangements were so faulty that they greatly facilitated the desire exhibited by Gentlemen below the Gangway to ensure the freedom from secrecy of the ballot by enabling a number of gentlemen who had no business there to loiter about the rooms. To his own knowledge, in many districts the polling booths were crowded from morning to night by people who had no more business there than he had. [An hon. MEMBER: Where?] It occurred all over the country; and he thought it undesirable that anything should be done which would have the effect of further limiting the accommodation then afforded. With regard to the presiding officers, he held that they were already amply paid; and he would point out that there was no difficulty in getting gentlemen to undertake the office. In his own constituency the proposal of the Bill would make a difference of no less than £54 additional expense for Returning Officers alone, there being 18 polling districts, which, at £3 3*s.* extra each, would amount to the sum named, while the travelling expenses at some of the stations would be small, because the Belfast and County Down Railway would convey all the officers from the different districts, and bring back all the ballot boxes. Hon. Gentlemen opposite had spoken of the object of the Bill as being to inflict a fine on bogus candidates, so as to prevent the setting up of bogus candidates. He did not think bogus candidates would be found in the ranks of those who were sneered at as representing the landlord party, because too much care was being taken to deplete their money bags, so that there need be little fear of their entering into heavy expenditure for sham purposes. But how would it be in the case of men who were advocating new opinions and ventilating new ideas? How, he asked, would it be in the case of the working men candidates in many of the districts where they had not as yet shown themselves, but which they might desire to contest, if they were to be fined in the manner suggested by the Bill, because they might not be able to succeed in at once persuading a large number of electors to give them their support? How would it be possible to get the great labour question fairly put before the constituencies? They must either trust men who were not to be trusted, or run the risk of imposing a ruinous fine on those whom they got to contest the districts. He did not propose to contest very violently the principle of the Bill, if that principle were that election expenses should be reduced; but he would oppose the Bill on the ground that it ought to be applied to the whole of the United Kingdom, and not to Ireland only. It would be much better if the matter were taken up by Her Majesty's Government, and a Bill introduced by them in such a form that it would be applicable to the whole of the United Kingdom.

SIR JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield) wished to ask the Lord Advocate, whether the Government were likely to make the Bill applicable to England, because there was on the Paper a Bill on the same subject relating to Scotland which was not yet printed? He had just been told so at the Vote Office, where he had asked for a copy of it.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.) said, there were two Bills on the Paper to-day. One of them, not printed, was given Notice of by his hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen; but when the Government took the matter up his hon. Friend did not persevere with his Bill. The Government Bill had been printed for weeks.

MR. ESSLEMONT said, there was evidently a misunderstanding about this Bill, because when he inquired he got the very same answer, that the Bill was not yet printed.

THE LORD ADVOCATE: Perhaps I may be allowed to explain——

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order; Sir John Swinburne.

SIR JOHN SWINBURNE said, that as he had been a considerable sufferer at the late Election he would give this Bill his most hearty support, and if the Forms of the House allowed, he would move in Committee to make it applicable to England. Working-men candidates would favour such a Bill more than others, because, before submitting their claims to a constituency, they were well aware of the amount of support they were likely to obtain. In the North of England working-men candidates suffered very severely from having men put forward without the remotest chance of election.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.) said, that the Irish Members had good reason to be gratified with the reception which the Bill had received on both sides of the House. They would be only too happy to see the Bill extended to England if English Members so desired; but the history of the Returning Officers' Expenses Act of 1875 had something to do with the Bill being introduced as applicable to Ireland alone. When the Bill of 1875 was introduced by the right hon. and learned Member for Bury (Sir Henry James), Mr. Butt, on behalf of the Irish Representatives, protested against its application to Ireland, and it was agreed by the right hon. and learned Gentleman that it should not be extended to Ireland, and so passed its second reading. The late Mr. M'Carthy Downing, however, in Committee, and behind the backs of the majority of the Irish Party, got the Bill applied to Ireland. At no time consequently had the Irish Members agreed to the principles of the Returning Officers Act of 1875; and last year when they moved in the matter they got a pledge from the Government that when the subject came up again Ireland would be dealt with. He and his Colleagues were in almost entire agreement with the remarks made by the hon. and gallant Member for North Down. That hon. Member's points were all such as might be dealt with in Committee. The hon. Member was in error in supposing that the Bill would increase the Returning Officers' fee for polling booths to £5 5*s.*; because the hon. Member had not noticed that all the expenses for ballot boxes and mileage were proposed to be taken away, and thus, to a large extent, the Bill diminished the cost. If the hon. Gentleman, before speaking, had examined the Bill more at large he would have perceived his error. The fact was the "Loyal minority" had been misled in regard to the Bill by the hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet (Colonel King-Harman), who had not appeared previously in the House for a long time, and had on his re-appearance to-day assumed the leadership of that minority. Perhaps, now that the hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet perceived that the Bill would be extended to England, he would see the advantage of allowing it to proceed. The hon. and gallant Member for North Down (Colonel Waring) had spoken of the Clare election; but he should be more careful before he indulged in reckless statements, which he was so fond of making; for the truth was that the Clare Convention was attended by delegates from every district of the county, and the County of Catholic Emancipation unanimously adopted the candidature of the Ulster Protestant (Mr. Jordan.)

MR. HOLMES (Dublin University) said, he was surprised at the readiness with which the principle of this Bill had been adopted by hon. Members on the Liberal and Radical Benches. He thought it was conceded that the principle of the Bill was to be found in the second sub-clause of Clause 2, and he agreed with an hon. Member that the principle ought not to be regarded from a Party point of view. It would be admitted by every one that the principle involved was an innovation—nothing resembling it was to be found in existing legislation, and he believed that nothing resembling it had ever before been submitted to the consideration of this House. It was not merely an innovation—it would be found on examination to be a very dangerous innovation. In so saying, he was looking at the principle, not alone from the Tory point of view; but from the point of view in which questions of this kind were usually regarded by Liberals and Radicals. That House had over and over again engaged in legislation for the purpose of enabling the free will of the people to be expressed at a General Election. It seemed just as important that candidates desirous of advocating particular principles should have an opportunity of doing so without any risk of penalty. It had been said that it was desirable to keep away bogus candidates; but his difficulty was how to find out whether they were bogus candidates or not. He was satisfied that they never could apply as a test the number of votes a man might receive from a constituency. He thought it would be admitted by everyone that the limit in this Bill of one-half the number of votes would be no test. He admitted the number was a matter which might be left till the Committee stage; but he personally found a difficulty in defining any number which would be a fair test. The real question was this—was the candidate coming forward in good faith to support principles in which he believed, and with regard to which a number of men in the constituency might share his belief? When labour candidates first came forward in England they received very little support; but they were not bogus candidates in any respect. They were desirous of seeing how far their opinions were supported, and as election after election passed they obtained favour among the constituencies. One of the things to be expected from Democratic constitutions was that a greater variety of opinions would spring up, and that instead of having two great Parties they might have three or four. They could understand that a person knowing he had but a small minority of followers in a constituency might think it well to introduce his views to that constituency in the hope that as time went on those views might permeate the greater portion of the electors. So much as to the principle. On a secondary matter, he pointed out that the security deposited with the Sheriff now was based on the fact that the unsuccessful candidate should pay half the expenses. If this arrangement were altered to make the unsuccessful candidate pay the entire amount the security must, of course, be increased. That provision would not bear hardly on those who had money to spare, but on those who had not. Every Member of the House was interested in keeping down the Sheriff's expenses as much as possible. Any amendment of the Schedule of the Act of 1875, by which the Returning Officer's charges would be amended, was not unreasonable. It was desirable that the Sheriffs should be indemnified; but he was opposed to their getting one penny beyond the amount necessary to indemnify them. The Schedule to that measure did not specify the sum the Sheriff was, under all circumstances, to receive, but the maximum amount; and there was provision for taxing the Sheriff's bill by means of a satisfactory tribunal, there being an appeal to a County Court Judge in Ireland. It might be that the maximum charges fixed by the Schedule were too great; but it occurred to him that the House would be a very bad tribunal sitting in Committee to decide that question. The Government, he thought, should consider this Bill as they had considered the Bill in regard to Scotland; or it might be dealt with by a small Committee, which would go into details, and if necessary take evidence. He did not see his way, however, to support the principle of the Bill, and therefore could not vote for its second reading.

Mr. MAURICE HEALY (Cork) said, he apprehended that the question the House ought to consider was not whether the principle of the Bill was an innovation—which it no doubt was—but whether it was a desirable innovation. The right hon. and learned Gentleman who had last spoke did not think it a desirable innovation. He agreed with the right hon. and learned Gentleman's argument to this extent—that they could not draw a hard-and-fast line which would decide in every case whether or not a candidate was bogus. The Bill did not enact that a man should not become a candidate unless he was certain of receiving a certain number of votes. All it enacted was that a candidate who was not satisfied that he should get a reasonable proportion of votes should not put his opponent to the expense of a contest. He thought that a safe and just and an equitable rule. The right hon. and learned Gentleman argued that the Bill would press against working-men candidates. That House, he hoped, would give no more encouragement to working men, as far as unreasonable contests were concerned, than to any other candidates. All that working men could require was that they would be made equal to their social superiors before the law. In Ireland, at the last Election, they had to deal not merely with individual bogus candidates, but with a universally extended organization —[*cheers*]—of bogus candidates. It appeared that the notion held by the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh who cheered (Major Saunderson) of a bogus candidate was that the description did not apply to one who got only 30 votes, while his opponent received 6,000; so the House need not concern itself with the views of the hon. and gallant Gentleman on this subject. Candidates were put forward in Ireland who had not the smallest hope of getting more than an infinitesimal fraction of the votes of the constituency. The Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union not merely put constituencies to the turmoil of contested elections in hopeless cases, but they did so without any pecuniary risk to these bogus candidates, and some of their candidates engaged in contests at a pecuniary profit. ["No, no!" *and* "Hear, hear!"] He was himself personally aware of one case of the sort; and he would fearlessly state the fact in the House, that one of the candidates who was put up to contest one of the divisions of the County of Cork made a profit of considerably over £100. [*Cries of* "Name!"] He made that statement from his own personal knowledge. [*Renewed cries of* "Name!"] His Colleague to whom he referred was Dr. Kenny. When these things happened he apprehended it was high time for the House to inquire into the matter. It had been said that the effect of Clause 2 of the Bill would be to necessitate an increase in the amount of security to be lodged by a candidate. That, he thought, was a mistake; because it had been invariably found that the deposit was far in excess of what the election could legitimately cost. When once the House had ascertained that the machinery for Parliamentary elections was used to give trouble and annoyance to political opponents, and to impose large expense upon them, it was the duty of the House to interfere and see that the machinery should be no longer put to that illegitimate use. As to the second branch of the question, there seemed to him to be a general concurrence of opinion in the House.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I agree with the hon. Member who has just sat down that the general effect of the discussion, in spite of what at first promised to be one or two rather heated passages as to the interpretation of the last elections in Ireland, has been to develop a very strong concurrence of opinion in all parts of the House. The hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Major Saunderson) even, who objected so much to one of the sub-sections of the Bill, said his dissent only arose on points which could be satisfied and removed in Committee. So I understood him. [Colonel WARING: As regards election expenses.] Yes; but this Bill is, in its substance, a Bill for the reduction of expenses. On that hon. Gentlemen from Ireland below the Gangway, and on this side of the House, are of the same mind. There has been almost complete unanimity of opinion in all quarters of the House; and it is perfectly natural, and almost inevitable, that it should be so. Of course, we all, whether the majority or the minority, are interested in getting election expenses reduced to the lowest possible level. Some objection has been taken by hon. Gentlemen to the fact that this Bill deals especially with Ireland. One hon. Gentleman expressed the benevolent wish that even Coercion Acts might be extended to England and Scotland and Wales. We on this side of the House may be excused for dissenting from that view; but the truth is that under the existing state of the law a difference is made between the different parts of the United Kingdom. For example, the Returning Officers Act of 1875 does not extend to Scotland; and as Her Majesty's Government, in the present Session, is to ask the House to alter the system of election expenses in Scotland, it would be very difficult for us to resist a Bill for reforming election expenses in Ireland merely on the ground that it affected only one part of the United Kingdom. I confess my opinion at first rather turned in the direction indicated by the right hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Mr. Holmes), that there are points in the Bill which might be with advantage referred to a small Committee, because the virtue of this Bill, apart from the disputed clauses, lies in the Schedule, and the Schedule refers to minute details; and it is rather an open question with me whether Parliament possesses the necessary information in order to settle the scheme without taking evidence. It might be found upon investigation that some Sheriffs were able to show that they have actually been put to costs payable by themselves for expenditure inadequately provided for by the Schedule which now exists; and Irish Sheriffs are not in such easy circumstances at present that it would be desirable to impose upon them any risk of being put to personal expense. However, I have listened to the course of the debate, and it has become pretty clear that Gentlemen from Ireland, both above and below the Gangway, feel that they know enough on this subject to decide in Committee upon the terms and details of the Schedule in this Bill. That being so, and being a matter which really concerns Gentlemen from Ireland, it is no longer my intention to insist upon a reference of the Bill to a Select Committee as a condition of our assent to the second reading of it. Upon the clause which has given rise to so much interesting discussion I feel rather more reserve; because there is no doubt, as the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh has said, that it is an innovation, and I, for one, have so often been in a minority in my life that I am not inclined to put a penalty on any person who happens to be in a minority. I think, however, the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Dublin University, when he said the effect of this clause would be to deny the right of taking one's chance at an election unless you were perfectly certain of a majority, is not quite accurate. It is clear that is not the intention of the clause, and I do not think that a clause in that sense would be accepted by Parliament. The hon. Members below the Gangway, I believe, are ready to assent to a change in the proportion of the votes which would be required to exonerate an unsuccessful candidate from liability; and though I cannot feel that the effect of the clause would be what was stated by the hon. Members from Ireland above the Gangway, still it does introduce a very remarkable change into the principles of our electoral proceedings. It would be very difficult to justify the extension to Ireland of that change, unless we were prepared to extend it to England as well. I am bound to say, at the same time, that it appears to be perfectly certain that if we had a Bill embodying this principle of the pecuniary liability of bogus candidates with regard to England, if put to the test of a division this afternoon, such a Bill would be carried. A good deal has been said as to the definition of a bogus candidate. We, ourselves, in the Bill brought in by the Lord Advocate dealing with the case of Scotland, define a certain kind of bogus candidate, but not the kind referred to by the framers of this Bill. The Bill of my right hon. and learned Friend is to the effect that when a candidate, generally known as a carpet-bagger candidate, ventures to invade Scotland, then the persons who sign his nomination paper shall be liable, conjointly with the candidate and with each other, for the charges payable to the Returning Officer by such candidate. The question of bogus candidates arises in various shapes and various conditions; but that is one way of dealing with this particular form of candidate. The question of the exact proportion of votes which shall constitute the unlucky candidate a bogus candidate is, I confess, somewhat difficult to determine; but I am clear that whatever the proportion is it ought to be the same in all the three parts of the United Kingdom—I mean so long as we continue our existing system of legislation. One method of dealing with a familiar form of bogus candidate has been referred to; but I should prefer to see it dealt with by the proposal for a second ballot. I believe that that would be the most effectual check on such a candidature. [Mr. T. M. HEALY: Who would pay for the first?] There are other proposals for dealing with a similar evil. From these illustrations I have given of the difficulties surrounding the question of the bogus candidate I think it will be seen that we ought to move with considerable caution. I, therefore, must not be understood as pledging the Government when the Bill reaches Committee to accept, without further precautions and reservations, the principle which is laid down in the second subsection of Clause 2. I do not think I have anything to add to these remarks, beyond saying that, in the circumstances I have described, Her Majesty's Government felt themselves unable to offer any resistance to the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities) said, that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary had told them that any legislation on this matter ought to apply to the Three Kingdoms, and not to Ireland alone; and it was, therefore, quite evident that he did not immediately expect that their Irish Friends below the Gangway would have an opportunity of making their own laws. As a Member for Scotland, not elected by ballot, he might say a few words on this question. The right hon. Gentleman had truly said that the definition of a bogus candidate was a very difficult matter. He (Mr. Macdonald) did not think that that difficulty would ever be satisfactorily got over by fixing a proportion to sums of money or averages; because they might have many cases in which a candidate, representing general political opinions, might, in consequence of some special question arising in the constituency at the time of the election, or about which in that constituency there was a strong feeling, find himself in a considerable minority. The hon. Member for Kilkenny (Mr. Chance) mentioned that this Bill would have a great effect in preventing three candidates contesting one seat. Was it always to be supposed to be desirable to exclude the possibility of there being three candidates for a seat? Were there not questions—such as the great Liquor Question—that sometimes so agitated the community that up to the day of the poll it was extremely difficult and uncertain to guess how the vote would go with three candidates, two of whom might be Liberal, and one Conservative? Was the least successful of the three to be held to be a bogus candidate because, forsooth! his number was not a third of the number of the successful candidate? They might have many similar cases; but what struck him most forcibly about this sub-section of Clause 2 was that it went directly in the teeth of all the principles they had been endeavouring to establish for many years in regard to the freedom of the voter to conceal altogether until he went to the poll for whom he intended to vote. He knew that many who would vote for this Bill would be prepared to vote against canvassing or against voters being asked to pledge themselves for one particular candidate before the election. Well, if it was a sound principle to put down canvassing and pledging, how on earth, while they voted under the ballot, could anyone ascertain whether the principles which he had been pressing on the community were making progress unless it was tested at the ballot box? If unsuccessful, then was he ever afterwards to be denied the right of impressing those principles on the community, or of showing, from time to time, by the polling at an election, that there was an increasing minority in favour of his views? He would ask hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway whether they considered that taking divisions in this House, when they had no expectation for a moment of carrying them, was a bogus proceeding or not? Were Irish Members prepared to say that progress towards success upon their part of the principles they had in view had not been made by taking divisions which were practically, according to the view of the House generally at the time, bogus divisions? [An hon. Member: They cost nothing.] They cost time and shoe-leather. They had heard of a certain proceeding called Obstruction, of which they had seen very little this Session; but he presumed Obstruction meant bogus working against the House carrying on its Business; and he was sure no Irish Member would get up and say that he did not consider that a most valuable weapon for influencing public opinion in his favour; for he understood that the sole reason, not for giving the Irish a Legislature of their own, but for the Irish not sitting in this House, was that their presence here was looked upon by the Prime Minister as a very great obstruction to the Business of the other parts of the Kingdom. Therefore, he must say that as regarded the principle of this Bill, which was entirely contained in sub-section 2 of Clause 2, he could never give it his support. If he could see, or if any Member could show him any possible criterion by which they could possibly fairly test a bogus candidate, then no one would be more in favour of the principle than he; but it was because he saw that in endeavouring to stop what, undoubtedly, was an evil they would create greater evils that he was decidedly against the principle of this clause. One evil most certainly would follow, and that was that in the case of candidates where there was considerable doubt in regard to both candidates as to how the vote would go, so far as the proportion fixed by the Act was concerned, then they would have the greatest temptation to corruption and bribery on the part of both candidates, because they would introduce into the question of election a direct money interest to be fought for at the poll. The losing candidate would have an interest to do what he could to bribe over, say, 40 or 50 electors, so as to get his proportion of one-third or whatever it might be, and the other candidate might do the same thing in order to get the proportion of two-thirds. It might thus become a mere question of money and of debauching a constituency. As regarded the remaining parts of the Bill, he and all Scottish Members could give hearty concurrence to the proposal to have a Schedule of expenses for limiting the expenses, and also to the principle that the Sheriff or Returning Officer should be fully indemnified for reasonable expenses, but should in no case receive any profit out of that duty. But while that was perfectly correct, that was no reason for having separate Bills on the subject for the Three Kingdoms, and he thought there should be a Bill applicable to the United Kingdom. Their view was that the proper course to take was to assimilate the law of Scotland in regard to this matter to that of England, except so far as it might be desirable to make such alterations in the Schedule necessary from the different circumstances of the two countries. He trusted that, as a result of this debate, they would have applied, as regarded Returning Officers' expenses, one principle for the whole of the United Kingdom.

SIR JAMES P. CORRY (Armagh, Mid) said, that he did not rise for the purpose of opposing the second reading of the Bill before the House, for he believed that in whatever part of the House they sat they were all agreed that the expenses of elections should be made as small as possible. All that he took exception to in the Bill was the 2nd sub-section of the 2nd clause. This, he thought, at all events in its present shape, would work most injuriously; and he therefore hoped that the hon. Member who brought in the Bill would consent to omit that clause. He only wished now to refer to a remark of the hon. and learned Member for South Derry (Mr. T. M. Healy) as to the omission of Ireland from the Returning Officers Act of 1875. When that Bill, which was in charge of the then hon. and learned Member for Taunton (Sir Henry James), was introduced into the House it included Ireland; but most of the Irish Members were not satisfied that Ireland should be so included, and therefore Ireland was left out. That was one of the great misfortunes in the use of separate legislation for different parts of the United Kingdom. He had much rather that matters of interest to all the Three Kingdoms be dealt with all together, and he thought it unfortunate that Ireland should be excluded from the Act in question. The Chief Secretary said that he had at first been in favour of referring the Bill to a Select Committee, and that he had since changed his mind. He (Sir James P. Corry) thought there would be great advantage in referring the Bill to a Select Committee, when the Schedule might be examined. He had a telegram in his hand from a gentleman who had served the office of Sheriff at a contested election in Ireland; and this gentleman, to whom he had sent a copy of the Bill, said that the proposed changes in the Schedule were totally inadequate, and he was prepared to give evidence to that effect before a Select Committee. He thought, therefore, that it would be well if the Government would, under all the circumstances, consent that after the second reading the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee. The proceedings begun, that Committee need not be long, and then in a short time the whole matter might be disposed of. He did not personally desire to oppose the second reading; but he hoped that the Government would see that the 2nd clause required modification. He thought that clause, as it stood, would defeat the object of many gentlemen who wished to stand as candidates. There was another point. An hon. Member below the Gangway (Mr. M. Healy) had said that some of those who stood against his friends at the last Election had received a pecuniary consideration for so doing, and had made money out of the transaction. But he was told by gentlemen who could speak with authority on the point that the hon. Member had been entirely misinformed; and he must say that he thought that before making a statement of such a kind as that he had referred to, hon. Members ought to take care that their information was correct. In conclusion, he desired to say that he had no objection to the second reading, provided that the 2nd clause of the Bill, as it now stood, underwent modification in Committee.

Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 174; Noes 56: Majority 118.—(Div. List, No. 95.)

COMPULSORY PURCHASE OF LAND COMPENSATION BILL.—[Bill 145.]

(*Mr. M'Laren, Mr. Houldsworth, Mr. Joseph Bolton, Mr. Jesse Collings.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. M'LAREN (Stafford), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, its object was to amend one of the sections of the Land Clauses Consolidation Act, which dealt with the mode in which juries and arbitrators assessed damages for land required for public purposes by Corporations and other public authorities under powers of compulsory purchase. The present system on which compensation was assessed in cases of public undertakings was entirely one-sided. The owner of land which was required by the promoters of public improvements generally asked a price in excess of the real value of the land, with the intention, in many cases, of extorting money from the Corporation proposing to purchase. The Act gave the parties power to go to a jury, or to have an arbitrator appointed to assess the value; but instead of the law enabling the promoters and the owner to state their respective cases fairly, all evidence on the part of the promoters to show that the proposed works would increase the value of other adjoining property belonging to the same owner was excluded, while the owner was placed in the position of being able to bring a train of professional witnesses to prove that he would be seriously prejudiced by the execution of the works. On the one-sided argument which thus took place compensation was assessed, and it was in most cases very much above the real value of the land. The Bill would alter this state of things, and would enable both sides of the question to be heard, leaving the jury to decide, as at present. When town improvements were being effected, and the houses on one side of the street were pulled down, and the frontages set back, the value of the houses left on the other side was often enormously increased. The result was that Corporations became land-jobbers. In Manchester the Corporation bought a very large tract of building land on each side of the street, so that the whole of the property, with its improved value, should be theirs. That was not a thing to be encouraged. The debts of Corporations were very largely increased by the system. What he proposed was no novelty. It was the law of the United States, of France, and of other countries. He had taken pains to ascertain what the law on the subject was in various countries, and he found that the procedure was such as this Bill, if passed, would introduce into this country. All the French railways had been made under such a law; and commercial improvements under a law even more stringent against owners. What he proposed was simply a concession to natural equity and to the ordinary principles of justice. The House knew very well that the capital spent on purchases for railways very largely exceeded the value of the property acquired. Railway Companies had paid for the land they required more than £50,000,000 beyond what justice would have exacted. He was very much mistaken if that House would insist any longer on continuing those advantages to landholders, which had cast such heavy burdens on railway property and on those who had to pay railway rates. Having pointed out numerous actual cases of excessive valuations of land acquired recently by new lines near London, and shown that there was a practical grievance in the law as it stood, he hoped the House would consent to the second reading of the Bill, which he now begged to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. M'Laren.*)

MR. GREGORY (Sussex, East Grinstead) said, that the Bill would introduce an entirely new method of valuation—namely, that the jury, in estimating the value of the property to be acquired, should take into consideration the contingent advantages which might accrue to the adjacent property from the change proposed. He recollected that when he practised before Parliamentary Committees, the first two days of their sitting was usually occupied by the promoters of any undertaking of importance in giving evidence of the great benefits which it would confer upon the district. Evidence of traffic managers, surveyors, and officials was never wanting, and all this would be at the command of promoters in any case of valuation; and how was an individual to meet it? It was entirely evidence of opinion, and any individual must be placed under great disadvantage in meeting it. It must be borne in mind that the valuation preceded the completion, if not the commencement, of the undertaking. There was nothing, therefore, by which to test the opinion expressed, and in some cases the undertaking might never be carried out or completed at all. Where it was, a man might have half his field, or warehouse, or factory taken, and be told that he was entitled to no compensation for it in consideration of the contingent advantages to the remaining half. The extravagant expenditure which Railway Companies often incurred was in many cases due to the proposed establishment of competing or "fighting" lines. In one case he was told by the late Mr. Robert Stephenson that £500,000 had been utterly wasted. Something had been said of the expense incurred in acquiring land for a line to Harrow. He did not think that £300 per acre was at all too large a sum to give for land near London. He had himself sold land near London for £1,000 an acre. He ventured to think the proposed alteration was entirely uncalled for, and that the existing legislation was quite satisfactory in its working. Holding that no case had been made out for the Bill, he begged to move that it be read a second time that day six months.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan), who seconded the Amendment, argued that it was not possible to foretell whether a locality would be advantageously or disadvantageously affected by a railway. His observation led him to conclude that the extension of railways benefited large towns to the detriment of smaller ones. The large town was aggrandized, enterprize being attracted to it, and the smaller suffered a proportionate loss. It was always uncertain whether a complicated line of railway would really be constructed; and, therefore, it was impossible, during the negotiations for the sale of a property, to have regard to the results of an undertaking which might never be completed. He admitted that in the early days of railway management very large sums were paid for land; but those days had gone by, and extravagant prices were no longer exacted. He was in favour of allowing the law to remain unaltered, except with regard to improvements which Local Authorities might wish to make. In cases of that kind the change which the hon. Member opposite desired to introduce might be desirable; but it should apply only to the actual property on which the improvements were to be effected, and not to property in the neighbourhood.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Gregory.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.) said, he supposed that in all parts of the House they should be agreed that when any man's property was taken for a public or mercantile purpose he ought to be fairly and consequently fully compensated. The true question, therefore, to be answered in all such cases was, what was fair, and including in that idea full compensation? That, he took it, was the primary criterion of the justice of any principle or standard of valuation. He ventured to submit that the present system which prevailed under the Lands Clauses Act of England, and the corresponding Act of Scotland, did not conform to that standard, in the particular that his hon. Friend (Mr. M'Laren) had pointed out, and that his Bill did correct a blot which must have struck everyone who had had large experience in the valuation of lands taken for public purposes as requiring amendment. The hon. Members who opposed the Bill spoke of the introduction into the measure of speculative and prospective elements not susceptible of precise ascertainment. That was the main burden of the adverse argument. One would suppose from that that in what he would call the original or primary claim which was made by the landowner there was no ingredient of that kind. But was that so? He hoped to be able to show that there was no more speculation in what his hon. Friend proposed to make the set-off than there was in the original claim against which a set-off was to be made. His hon. Friend simply said—"I first allow to the owner of the property the full value of his property as it stands, without considering how it will be affected by the undertaking." That might be called the debtor side of the account on the part of the undertaking and the creditor side on the part of the person whose land was taken. "But then," said his hon. Friend, "let us see whether this man is made better or worse. If he is not made worse, but is made better, then he has nothing to be compensated for, and any advantages he may get from the undertaking which improves his position ought to enter into the account and be deducted, and then the balance will remain." He (the Lord Advocate) put it to the House whether on the first blush of it that was not absolutely and entirely just. When he first found the practice to be that they were to look to one side of the account only and shut their eyes to the other, he was much surprised; but he thought this would be a very proper occasion for amending it. When a man asked that his land should be valued with a view to compensation, did he limit his claim and his evidence of the value of the land in its present condition and in its present occupation? If the land was now agricultural land, did he assume it was always to be agricultural land? Certainly that was not his experience. One of the most important elements of evidence given with regard to land was its prospects and its chances; and it was said, with perfect justice, that if they took a man's land from him for a public purpose, they were not entitled to limit him to the value of the land at the present moment if that land had prospects and chances. If any man should say his land was building land, or was available for any other purpose for which he was likely to get a higher price, he got credit for that in the original valuation. That showed that into the original valuation all these elements of estimation and calculation of prospects and contingencies and chances entered. If it was just that they should enter into the original claim, why was it not just that they should enter into the counter-claim, or set-off? His hon. Friend proposed to make this possible. The effect of the present law was that a man might both get the full value of his land, with all its prospects, on the assumption that he was not to have an advantage from the undertaking, and he might at the same time get advantages from the undertaking which might be equal, or possibly more than what he suffered if his land was taken away. The result of that was that he might be compensated twice over. He might be compensated for the price of his land which was fixed on a liberal scale, and he might be compensated a second time by the advantages which the Railway Company might bring to him by turning the land into a very lucrative purpose. It treated him, in other words, as an injured man when he was really a benefited man. His hon. Friend only proposed to leave it to the judgment of arbitrators or juries to take the two sides of the account into estimation, and to strike the balance favourably for the person whose land was invaded, and to see that on the whole he did not suffer wrong, but was rather the better. His hon. Friend did not bind them to give more effect than they thought just to those considerations, but only asked that they should not be shut out from their view; and as the Bill proposed a remedy for an evil which, in practical experience, was often felt in those matters, he thought the measure should at all events have a second reading, whatever amendment it might be thought necessary to make in Committee.

Mr. BEADEL (Essex, Chelmsford) said, that having had considerable experience on that question, he could give numerous instances where land had been taken by a Railway Company at the verge of the owner's estate, and where the adjoining owners had benefited to as great an extent by the railway as the man whose property had been actually taken. If it was desired to multiply expenses and to inflict injuries on people, he thought it could best be done by carrying the second reading of that Bill. If they were, on the one hand, to go through the process of fighting what the compensation was to be, and, on the other hand, to fight the creditor side of the account, and disprove that the property would be increased in value as much as the Railway Company asserted, they would duplicate every compensation case that was tried after that Bill passed. The practice followed in France and America had been referred to in support of the Bill; but he thought the English system was a far better one. The Lands Clauses Act had worked well for a considerable number of years. With regard to the compensation that had been given for land at Harrow, he could say that the land had been bought for a very reasonable price, having regard to its situation. It would be most unjust to compel a landowner in these days, when heavy compensation for the compulsory purchase of land was not given, to face the expense of a double inquiry. He therefore strongly supported the Amendment.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) supported the Bill, which he regarded as only providing a very small instalment of legislation in the right direction. It was most unjust that the public should be robbed at every turn simply to give a bribe and a sop to the landed interest, to allow the material resources of the country to be developed.

Mr. MAURICE HEALY (Cork) pointed out that in Ireland, when a new road was made, its cost was apportioned according to the benefit which the occupiers of the adjoining property derived from it. He hoped that the provisions of this measure would be extended to Ireland.

Mr. CROMPTON (Staffordshire, Leek), in supporting the Bill, said, the real question was, did the landowners get more than a fair share of compensation for their land, which was compulsorily taken from them? He ventured to say they did. The hon. Gentleman who had just spoken (Mr. Beadel) had referred to the honourable and generous conduct of certain gentlemen having land through which a railway ran, some little distance from London. That only showed that those gentlemen were satisfied with obtaining a fair price for their land, instead of the unfair and much larger amount which they might have obtained as compensation. It was very well known that when extensions of railway were proposed to be made, secret purchases of land were carried out on behalf of the Railway Companies. He was informed that on the extension of the Midland Railway Company, from Carlisle to Settle, a large amount of the land that would be required for it was bought up by apparently private individuals for the Railway Company, but who were not at the time known to be purchasing on behalf of the Company. That was done, of course, before the Bill for the proposed extension was brought in, and the result was the land was obtained at a fair price. If the owners had known that the Bill was to be introduced, things might have been very different. It seemed to him quite preposterous that a landowner should be entitled to go to a railway and claim compensation for a tract of land that might be injured by a proposed new line, and yet should not pay anything on account of other parts of his property, which would be benefited by it. He would just give one instance, which he thought showed how the Act worked. With regard to the land on the banks of the Thames. It was well known that owners of land, who had property adjoining the Thames in London, had their land very much improved in value in consequence of the construction of the Thames Enbankment. He would take the case of the Duke of Buccleuch. ["Oh!"] The Duke had got a Crown lease of his property near the Thames, and there was a small pier running down from it to the river. In respect of that property he claimed, and got, several thousands of pounds for compensation, because the Embankment would prevent him from making use of this small pier, and from having direct communication to the river. It seemed to him (Mr. Crompton) that the Embankment improved the Duke's property instead of injuring it, and so far from receiving compensation he should have contributed towards that expense. He should support most heartily the second reading of the Bill of his hon. Friend.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, that under the provisions of this Bill a man's property might, in some cases, be taken from him without anything being paid to him for it. He objected to such a proposition as amounting to confiscation. They all knew that the confiscation of landed property was dear to many hon. Gentlemen opposite. Some hon. Members, perhaps, thought they could stop short at real property; but they were mistaken, for personal property would not escape. The principle of maintaining the security of property lay at the root of the prosperity of the nation. If it were imposed, capital which ought to be used for developing the resources of this country would go away to other parts of the world.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby) said, that if he had not been already convinced that this was a useful measure, he should have been satisfied that it was a measure of that character after hearing the speech just delivered by the hon. Member opposite. Sydney Smith reduced to a common form the Tory creed of his day; and although the phrases had altered since then, that common form still existed. Whenever a proposal was made to remove a substantial injustice we were always told it was confiscation. The notion of confiscation entertained by hon. Members opposite was that a man who was greatly benefited by a public undertaking should not be able to charge the public as if he had been greatly injured. That was their idea of confiscation. He would take from the hon. Member for Essex (Mr. Beadel) another illustration of the doctrine held on the other side of the House. The hon. Gentleman said that if a counter-claim were allowed to be set up the proceedings would be prolonged and made more expensive. This was, no doubt, true with regard to every law suit. If it were agreed to hear only one side the proceedings would, of course, be shorter and less expensive. Then it was said—"You are taking future and contingent advantages as against present loss." But did they not include future and contingent advantages in their claim? ["No, no!"] He thought he was right in supposing that hon. Members who denied that proposition had had no experience in compensation cases. The commonest case in the world was to take a piece of land, let it at £1 an acre, and claim for it as a prospective building land, and immense sums of compensation were paid on that principle. Supposing land-owners at Swindon and Crewe received large compensation for the "injury" that would be done to their land by the construction of the Great Western and North-Western Railways. Everybody knew that since the lines had been made the landlords had been benefited to the extent of thousands and tens of thousands of pounds. The hon. Member said that the railway might never be made. This was quite true; but, on the other hand, the land might never become building land. He ventured to say that no one of experience would deny that the most exorbitant and extortionate sums had been paid to landlords to the great injury of the public in these cases. He could only compare the attitude of the owners towards the Railway Companies to that of those Chieftains who once occupied the picturesque castles on the Rhine and who used to descend upon the peaceful traders and take toll of them as they carried on the traffic. That was the history of the extortion which was practised in former years. The hon. Member opposite challenged the case of the Duke of Buccleuch. He happened to be counsel for the Board of Works in the case of the Thames Embankment. The Duke said nothing would induce him to live at Montagu House if the Embankment was made. To this a reply was made that the making of the Embankment would remove the bargees from their then proximity to the garden wall; but Mr. Hope Scott, the Duke's counsel, said he did not mind that; they had got quite used to the bargees' conversation. The Duke also claimed compensation for "a hard" by which provisions and other articles were brought to the residence, and thus it came to pass that they used to speak of the "hard" case of the Duke of Buccleuch. Well, they had many hard cases. This was, after all, a very large question. The lawyers next to the landlords had taken a large toll of these Companies; and he should be extremely glad, as he had left that branch of the Profession, to see some measures taken by which the cost could be reduced of taking these Bills before Committees of the House. He hoped that this would be one of the reforms in their Procedure. No one could deny that the most extravagant charges had been placed on persons advancing works for the public advantage. If there were any points in this Bill, although he did not see them, which required correction, they could be corrected; and he thought it a most fair proposal that they should say to a man—"You suffer some disadvantages, but you also gain something, therefore both must be taken into consideration." He cordially supported the Bill.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.) said, there were two quarters against which the House should be on its guard; the one would be the quarter, to some extent, represented by the hon. Member for St. Pancras (Mr. Lawson)—namely, the capitalist in the character of the denouncer of landlords; and the other was the character which had just been represented by the right hon. Gentleman, the lawyer advocating philanthropy. The right hon. Gentleman advocated this Bill partly in the interest of the public, and partly in the interest of Railway Companies. That Gentleman had great sympathy with the Railway Companies of England for the great compensation they had had to pay to landlords at the beginning of their undertakings. This was all the more strange, as he was also one of the Government which had introduced into the House a Bill which Railway Companies denounced as the most extraordinary modern instance of public plunder for which any Government was responsible.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: They do not oppose it.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL said, the right hon. Gentleman could not have looked at the Paper, where there was a Notice by the hon. Member for Hythe (Sir Edward Watkin). The argument seemed to be that, the Railway Companies having been plundered in the past by the landlords, they were now to be plundered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. That was the remedy. But, apart from this little personal interlude as to the position occupied by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he would like to ask the Liberal Party, who seemed inclined to support the Bill, what was their real policy with regard to the land of this country? He understood that their great ideal—an ideal in which many Conservative Members shared—was to multiply the owners of land. Did they suppose they would multiply the number of the owners of land by diminishing the attractions of landed property, and by increasing the perils of that property? There was very little in the Bill which would injure the great landlord; but there was a great deal which might injure the little landlord. The great landlords could perfectly well hold their own, and could follow the Railway Companies into all the Law Courts. The people who were beaten by the Railway Companies were the little landowners, who could not bring evidence into the Courts, and could not obtain the illustrious legal aid of such counsel as the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If the House was anxious to increase the number of landowners it would make the possession of land as safe as possible; and he ventured to think that the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act was drawn up by some of the ablest men this country had ever known. He could truly say himself that he regarded the Lands Clauses Act with peculiar favour; because if it had not been for that Act the hon. Member for Hythe, in his capacity as Chairman of the Metropolitan Railway Company, would have done him out of something like £7,000, as he could not have afforded to follow him into the Law Courts. He would ask the House not to be led away by the abstract arguments of the hon. Member for St. Pancras and the hon. Member for Stafford, who on this occasion appeared to represent the Railway Companies, to hastily tamper with the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act. In doing so they would be dealing a vital blow at the possession of landed property; they would not only be preventing large capitalists from investing capital in land, and small capitalists from desiring to become landowners, but also would be hindering that which the Liberal Party professed to have so much at heart—namely, the multiplication of the number of the owners of land.

MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby) said, he agreed with the right hon. and learned Lord Advocate that at the first blush the Bill looked very nice; but it was entirely one-sided, and calculated to prevent the landowner from getting that which he would be entitled to for the fair value of his property. That would act most unfairly in the case of small freeholders, some of whom would lose their present income, whilst others would equally benefit, but pay nothing to the improvement. He would venture to suggest that even if it was carried with the support of Her Majesty's Government, without, as he thought, sufficient consideration being given to it, at any rate a clause might be inserted with the object of withholding any deduction until the improvements were made which gave the prospective value. He thought the case put forward by the noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill) was very strong. He believed the effect of the Bill would be to lead to a lot of jobbery, and that the lawyers of the future would profit by this Bill, if passed, as much as the lawyers of the past had profited by the Lands Clauses Act. If the Bill were read a second time it would have to be looked into very carefully in Committee. This, however, was a large question, and if it was to be dealt with at all it should not be dealt with by a private Member in the interests of the Railway Companies, but by the Government of the day. He should, therefore, vote against the second reading, because he did not think that in its present shape it ought to pass.

Lord JOHN MANNERS (Leicestershire, E.) said, he concurred with the right hon. Gentleman in considering this a large and important question; and for that reason he all the more regretted the readiness with which the Government, in an apparently hasty way, had decided to support it. With reference to the case of the Duke of Buccleuch, to which the right hon. Gentleman opposite had called attention, he might explain that some years before the Thames Embankment was sanctioned by Parliament the Duke undertook to spend a large amount of money in building on the site now occupied by Montagu House, upon the condition that the Government should resist any proposal to carry a road between it and the Thames. But after the house was built the Thames Embankment was sanctioned and made, and in consequence of the raising of the banks the levels of the house became wrong, and therefore the Duke's case for compensation was a very strong one. He did not think the right hon. Gentleman ought to have omitted all reference to the real case of the Duke of Buccleuch on that occasion.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth) said, that the proprietor whose land was improved by Railway Companies was not the man, generally speaking, through whose land the railway passed, but rather the man whose property adjoining the railway was not touched. Moreover, there were other damages which an owner might sustain of an indirect kind, for which he cannot obtain relief except by the expensive process of petitioning the House against a Bill, which he might not be able to afford, such as damage by vibration, or injury to drainage, or access to property not included in the plans deposited. He was himself, at the present time, a victim to a case of this sort, in which he had been compelled, at great expense, to petition Parliament. Again, a Railway Company might do a great injustice under this Bill, for in the preparation of their plans they might fix their limits of deviation as to include some small corner of an estate in order to bring into operation the functions of this Bill. He knew the provisions of the Bill were copied from Colonial Railway Bills; but there was no analogy between the two cases, because a railway running through a wilderness or bush would obviously give an enormous increase of value to the property.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 203; Noes 103: Majority 100.—(Div. List, No. 99.)

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Tuesday* next.

BEER ADULTERATION (No. 3) BILL.

(*Mr. Quilter, Mr. Duckham, Mr. Heneage, Mr. Everett.*)

[BILL 66.] SECOND READING.

[ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [14th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

Debate *resumed.*

Mr. QUILTER (Suffolk, South) said, he did not desire to treat this matter otherwise than in a serious vein, for it was one of immense importance to the constituency he had the honour to represent, and also to hundreds and thousands of working men in the Eastern Counties and in other parts of

England. This was not the first attempt that had been made to introduce a measure of this kind. It would be within the memory of those who were Members of the preceding House that a debate took place, at the instance of one of the hon. Members for Suffolk, in which they had arrayed against them official opposition. He had no doubt that any arguments in favour of the Bill that might be adduced in the course of the debate would be met by some official opposition, for there was never any question introduced which was likely to touch the Revenue of the country, but it was sure to bring up the whole strength of such opposition. He was convinced, however, that this simple measure, if granted, would prove of benefit to a very large number of working men. It was known by those who lived among the working classes that in many parts of the country beer was an important ingredient in their food. He regretted that very much; but he wished to inform hon. Members that in his division, where wages were 9*s.* and 10*s.* a-week, it was not possible for the working men to purchase for their wives and families meat or other nutritious substances, and milk was not always to be had. They were reduced to beer, or, at any rate, it was their habit to take beer for breakfast, beer for dinner, beer for tea, and beer for supper. Under these circumstances, he thought the House would agree with him that it was highly desirable that the poor man's beer should be pure. ["Hear, hear!"] Hon. Members who said "Hear, hear!" probably all of them had the privilege of ordering their Bass or Allsopp, or the drink which seemed to be the favourite beverage on the Treasury Bench just now—namely, "Whitbread's Entire." His poor friends had to have recourse to the "Thatchers' Arms" or the "Spotted Dog," and to drink that which was supplied to them there—a species of refreshment which he ventured to say hon. Members would not venture to take one glass of, and if they survived the first glass would register an oath they would have no more such muck. It was not for him to go into all the reasons which had brought about so sad a state of affairs. He really wished to do something which should somewhat remedy the existing condition of things, and in trying to do so he believed he should not appeal to the sense of justice of the House in vain. As a humble Representative of the class affected, he would tell them with all sincerity that there was hardly any measure before the House which was regarded with more anxiety amongst the labourers of South Suffolk than that now introduced. When the question was last before the House he had prepared for the edification of hon. Members a variety of samples of beer from different villages, and he would have introduced them; but, unfortunately, their quality was so inferior that in the 24 to 36 hours that passed from the time they came from South Suffolk they all became bad, and there was only one which the analyst stated was in a fit state for analysis. After that experience he had not ventured on this occasion to provide himself with any samples, though he believed that the practice had been very effective in some former debates in the House. What he asked the House to do by the Bill—he was perfectly aware that it was rather a difficult thing—was to define what beer was. It was to provide that when persons went to a public-house to obtain a refreshing drink they should be enabled to discern between drinks made from barley-malt and hops, and those other drinks which were manufactured from other ingredients. Mr. Young, the public analyst for the districts of Poplar, Whitechapel, and St. George-in-the-East, stated that beer brewed from malt contained more nutritive and strengthening properties, and the intoxicating effects of it were less marked than in beer brewed from substitutes for malt. He (Mr. Quilter) could say a good deal about the effect of fourpenny ale on the poor in the East of London; but this and other matters of controversy in connection with the Bill would be more properly dealt with when the Committee stage was reached. He should not venture to go into technicalities; but he thought he should be able to make out, or the hon. Members for Norfolk and Hertfordshire, who had Bills in almost every respect identical with his own, would be able to satisfy the House that there did exist a widespread desire for some legislation on this matter. What he asked the House to do was, at any rate, reasonable. It was the agricultural labourers, who had been recently enfranchised, who made a special claim upon the House for this legislation. It was not those so much who lived in the towns, where they had access to beer brewed by large and good brewers. It was well known that hon. Gentlemen belonging to the trade sitting in that House were notorious for brewing the finest quality of beer, and, therefore, any remarks he made could not be considered as personal to them; but it was in the interest of working men with large families, whose cottages were too small and whose wives had too much to do to brew beer at home, that he asked the House to give this matter some few moments' consideration. He felt strongly the conviction that something must be done, and he did not think the House would ever regret having listened to the prayer of the many thousands of agricultural labourers who were asking for some reform. If the House would take the matter into its own hands, it could do something to protect drinkers of beer and to restore the national beverage to the position it formerly occupied, which was indicated by lines he recently saw at the foot of one of Hogarth's pictures—

> "Beer, happy produce of our Isle,
> Can sinewy strength impart,
> And wearied with fatigue and toil,
> Can cheer each manly heart."

He trusted that would be the case in South Suffolk, and, in that hope, he begged to move the second reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Quilter.*)

SIR EDWARD BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.) said, he supported the second reading of the Bill most warmly, for he knew full well that what the hon. Member opposite had said was fully borne out in the Eastern Counties. He was about to present a Petition to the House containing 12,000 signatures, principally of labourers, in favour of one of the Bills before the House. There was not much difference between the Bill of the hon. Member opposite, who had just moved the second reading of the Bill now before the House (Mr. Quilter), the Bill of the hon. Member for Hertfordshire (Baron Dimsdale), and his own (Sir Edward Birkbeck's) Bill. The principle of the three was the same; and, as far as he (Sir Edward Birkbeck) was concerned, he did not care which of the three was passed, and the hon. Member (Mr. Quilter) might rely on his assistance with his Bill. Beer was the national beverage of England, and it must strike the House as peculiar and anomalous that that beverage should not be protected in any way from adulteration. If milk, flour, or sugar were adulterated, consumers were protected by the Food and Drugs Act, which could be readily put into operation for their protection; but, let beer be adulterated ever so much, there were no means of putting a stop to it. He thought there could be no doubt that beer brewed from barley-malt and hops was much more wholesome than beer brewed from potatoes, sugar, maize, or some extraordinary chemical concoction, of the composition of which they knew nothing; and he ventured to say that 99 per cent of the community would infinitely prefer, if they could have the choice, to have their beer brewed from barley-malt and hops, without the substitution or addition of any other ingredient whatever. It was to the fact that beer was so much adulterated that when a labourer drank a glass of beer he became heavy, drowsy, and thirsty, instead of being refreshed as he ought to be. As beer was the labourer's sole luxury, excepting, perhaps, tobacco, he (Sir Edward Birkbeck) thought it was only fair and reasonable that the labourer should be protected from the deleterious effects likely to be produced by the adulteration of that one luxury of his life, and to have it pure, instead of that which was too often sold. The recommendation of the Royal Commission on Agricultural Depression was strongly in favour of legislation of the character now proposed. The beer of Bavaria, Baden, and Wurtemburg was very much purer than most of that consumed in this country. If there were any hon. Member present who had drunk beer in Bavaria, Baden, or Wurtemburg, they would bear him out when he said that there was no beer in the world which would bear comparison with that brewed in those three places. And why was that the case? The reason was that there was a severe law against the adulteration of beer. One important alteration in line 14 he should ask the hon. Member (Mr. Quilter) to agree to—namely, to substitute the word "that" for "what." It was too much to ask that persons should be compelled to describe in detail what ingredients the beer which was sold was brewed from. The Bill introduced by himself said that the publican should be compelled to state only "that" other ingredients besides barley-malt and hops were used. He trusted the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Quilter) would agree to amend his Bill by accepting that provision. He hoped the Government would support the Bill. So strong was the feeling in the agricultural districts on this question of the adulteration of our national beverage that he felt sure that if one of these three Bills was not passed this year, there would be, instead of three Bills, six or seven Bills next year. He would venture to suggest to the Government whether they could not assent to the second reading of the three Bills, and then refer the whole of them to a Select Committee, rather than shelve the question.

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden), in supporting the second reading, said, he wished to affirm most strongly the remark that there was a deep and widespread feeling amongst the agricultural classes for this measure, or some one similar. The principle of the Bill was to guarantee that the important article of consumption—beer—should, like other important articles of consumption, be essentially what the consumers took it to be. He disclaimed that the intention of the Bill was in any way of an anti-temperance character. They recognized the evils done by the over-indulgence of intoxicating liquors. Neither was the Bill anti-publican, because it must be obvious, if pure beer was supplied, there would probably be no decrease in the consumption. Further, he did not think it was an anti-brewer's Bill; because there was no provision in the Bill to prevent brewers brewing from other materials than malt and hops if they wished to do so. All it sought to do was to provide that the public should know the ingredients of the beer they were consuming. Speaking for an agricultural constituency, and with an intimate knowledge of the agricultural classes, he most strongly urged the House, and especially hon. Members representing agricultural constituencies who wished to further agricultural interests, to support the second reading of the Bill.

BARON DIMSDALE (Herts, Hitchin) said, that as it was undesirable that the question should be hung up any longer, he hoped the House would come to a decision on the Bill that day. The time had come when legislation of this kind should be passed for Scotland and Ireland, as well as England; and he hoped, therefore, the Bill would receive the sympathy of Irish Members. All the three Bills were more or less framed upon the model of a Bill introduced into a former Parliament by Colonel Barnes and rejected by a narrow majority. The principal objection taken to the Bill on that occasion was that it rendered it compulsory on the brewer to brew only from malt and hops. The present Bill did not interfere with a free mash tub. Alike to drinkers and to brewers it was a measure of vast importance. It was intended to confer a particular advantage on the public, and would enable them to ascertain what they were really drinking. The measure, too, was of enormous interest to the agricultural classes of the country, both the farmers and the labourers.

MR. SHIRLEY (Yorkshire, W.R., Doncaster) said, that as a Member whose sympathies were entirely with the temperance movement he should support the second reading. He thought, however, he ought to enter a gentle protest against the description of beer given by the hon. Baronet the Member for East Norfolk, that it was "the national beverage of the country." If it were, he hoped it would not long continue so. Statistics showed that the consumption of beer was diminishing, and he heartily hoped it would go on diminishing. But he quite agreed with hon. Members who had spoken that if beer were to be drunk at all in this country it ought to be wholesome. He was convinced, however, that much of the beer drunk in this country, and in the country districts especially, was produced from deleterious substances, and was very unwholesome. It had a bad effect upon the constitutions of the people who drank it, and was the cause of much drunkenness which would not otherwise exist. Therefore, as he was anxious to diminish the amount of drunkenness in the country, he would support the second reading of the Bill.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby) said, he wanted to say, with reference to the Bill, that the Government was not going to oppose the second reading. When the Bill went into Committee he must reserve to himself the right of considering what protection might be necessary for the Revenue. The objects of the Bill, he confessed, would not be entirely secured by its provisions. It would not prevent the adulteration of beer. The adulteration of beer was not done, generally, by the brewers, but by the publicans. They might, therefore, have beer brewed from pure barley and hops tremendously adulterated afterwards by the publican, and that the Bill would not be able to prevent. The hon. Member for Norfolk would not deny that his great object was to encourage the growth of barley, and to prevent anything else coming into competition with it; but the Bill would not prevent brewers from using other materials like sugar, if they thought better to do so. He was speaking not long ago to a great brewer on the subject of these Bills, and the brewer said—"I cannot find any heart to oppose the Bill; it will be so immensely to my advantage. It will destroy the small brewers, because it will diminish the use of the materials which they chiefly use in brewing, and will not affect me." That was one effect which the Bill would have as it at present stood. It would restrict the freedom of the use of materials, and he was afraid—because they might have a perfectly wholesome beer brewed with a certain proportion of sugar and other materials—it would not prevent adulteration.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Wednesday* 2nd June.

CHURCH PATRONAGE BILL.—[BILL 4.]

(*Mr. Rylands, Mr. Leatham, Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Mr. Brinton.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*Mr. Leatham.*)

MR. RAIKES (Cambridge University) said, there was on the Paper a Notice of an Instruction to be moved on going into Committee, and there were several Amendments to be considered in Committee which could hardly be moved unless the Instruction were carried. But the hon. Members concerned were not present, as they had probably concluded that the Bill would not be reached that day in time to discuss it.

It being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATES (PENSIONS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Hastings, Bill to empower Local Authorities to grant Retiring Pensions to Stipendiary Magistrates, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Hastings, Mr. Kenrick, Mr. Forwood, and Mr. Wiggin.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 212.]

NATIONAL PROVIDENT INSURANCE.

Select Committee on National Provident Insurance to consist of Eighteen Members:—Mr. LLEWELLYN and Mr. WASON *added* to the Committee.—(*Sir Herbert Maxwell.*)

FORESTRY.

Select Committee on Forestry to consist of Eighteen Members:—Committee *nominated* of,—Sir JOHN LUBBOCK, Mr. CHARLES ACLAND, Mr. BIDDULPH, Sir SAVILE CROSSLEY, Viscount EBRINGTON, Dr. FARQUHARSON, Mr. FARQUHARSON, Sir JOHN KENNAWAY, Sir GEORGE GRANT, Sir EDMUND LECHMERE, Mr. GILHOOLY, Colonel NOLAN, Mr. NORTHCOTE, Sir HERBERT MAXWELL, Mr. MULHOLLAND, Mr. MARK STEWART, Mr. SEELY, and Sir HENRY MEYSEY THOMPSON, with power to send for persons, papers, and records; Five to be the quorum.—(*Sir John Lubbock.*)

House adjourned at ten minutes before Six o'clock.

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HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 13*th May*, 1886.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Friendly Societies Act (1875) Amendment* (99); National Debt* (100).

Second Reading—Referred to Select Committee—Church Patronage (63).

Committee — Report — Drowned Persons (Discovery and Interment)* (77); Burial Grounds (Scotland) Act (1855) Amendment* (78).

Third Reading—Metropolitan Police Stations* (87), and *passed.*

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS—*Second Reading*—Local Government (Ireland) (Public Health Act) * (83).

Third Reading—Metropolitan Commons * (71), and *passed.*

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

OBSERVATIONS.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY said, he did not see in his place the right rev. Prelate (the Bishop of Durham) who had charge of the Durham Sunday Closing Bill; but he would venture to urge whether, in putting down for to-day the Committee on a Bill the second reading of which was taken on Tuesday last, the right rev. Prelate had not gone beyond the Order of the House? The proposal to take the Committee stage that day hardly gave sufficient time to their Lordships to put down Amendments, or to consult with those persons in the country who might be interested in the measure and ought to have time to make suggestions as to modifications, and who must have been surprised at their Lordships' decision on Tuesday. He would suggest that if the Committee stage on the Bill were put down for that day week, it would be more in accordance with the ordinary practice. There was another Bill to which he wished to refer, and that was the Crofters Bill, which was put down for second reading on Monday. That Bill was one containing principles of a somewhat novel character, full of detail and of unusual complication. He did not wish to express any opinion either hostile or in favour of the Bill; but he thought it was rather making an undue demand on the rapidity with which their Lordships could proceed with the Bill, and make themselves acquainted with its provisions, to ask them to read it a second time on Monday. He did not see the Secretary for Scotland in his place, but he should suggest that the time for the consideration of the measure should be extended from Monday to Monday week. He was sure that this arrangement would be much more satisfactory to the people of Scotland. He had not taken upon himself to make these few observations without communicating with some of those Peers who understood the subject.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS said, he heartily agreed with what had fallen from the noble Marquess with respect to the Crofters Bill, which was a measure new in principle and details. He hoped the noble Earl the Secretary for Scotland (the Earl of Dalhousie) would agree to defer the second reading of the Crofters Bill till Monday week. With respect to the Durham Sunday Closing Bill, he hoped the right rev. Prelate would defer to the wish of the noble Marquess. If the Bill came on that evening no opportunity would have been given for putting Amendments on the Paper; and he hoped that two Amendments would be put down, one exempting the City of Durham, and the other limiting the time. He would ask their Lordships to reject the Bill on the third reading. Another reason why the Bill should be postponed was that the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack implied that a great number of the signatures to the Petition, containing 60,000 of the inhabitants of the county of Durham, which was presented by his noble and learned Friend (Lord Bramwell), were not really valid; that it was a bogus Petition, or contained sham signatures. He himself had been informed that the Petitions in favour of the measure had been largely signed by school children. That was an important matter, and he thought that the signatures to that and to the other Petitions ought to be inquired into by the Examiners of the House before the Bill was proceeded with.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL) said, he could have no possible objection to the Petitions being examined into. The noble Earl who had just spoken had misunderstood him if he thought that he had asserted that the Petition presented by the noble and learned Lord (Lord Bramwell) who moved the rejection of the Bill was a bogus Petition. All he said was that he never attached great weight to Petitions signed by individuals, whether on the one side or the other.

THE BISHOP OF DURHAM (Dr. LIGHTFOOT) said, that he had consulted the Clerk of the House before fixing the day, and had no desire to proceed with undue haste. He was quite willing to postpone the Committee stage of his Bill to a future day if there were a feeling in that direction, though he could not at that moment name the day.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS asked the Lord Chancellor whether there was any objection to the Petitions he had alluded to being examined into by the officers of the House?

THE LORD CHANCELLOR said, he was afraid he was as yet hardly in a position to say what was the usual practice of the House in such cases.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (The Earl of KIMBERLEY) said, he thought the noble Earl ought to give Notice of his intention to move that the Petitions be examined into.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS said, he would do so, and gave Notice that he would to-morrow move that the Petitions in reference to the Durham Sunday Closing Bill should be referred to the officers of the House for examination into the signatures.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY said, that he would put down the second reading of the Crofters Bill for Thursday next, subject to alterations.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, in assenting, said, that he was anxious the second reading should be taken when the Scottish Peers were in their places.

CHURCH PATRONAGE BILL.—(No. 63.)

(*The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY (Dr. BENSON), in moving the second reading of this Bill, said: I have first, my Lords, to remove the misapprehension that the Bill will injure private patronage. It is in no sense a Bill to destroy private patronage, or to condemn or ignore what have been recognized for centuries past as rights of property. The system of private patronage, my Lords, creates much interest of the best kind. It has done much to preserve good relations between the laity and the clergy, and has, besides, been well exercised, and is being increasingly well exercised. Private patrons have been most liberal donors towards the foundation of new parishes and new districts; since the foundation of the Ecclesiastical Commission they have made over to the Commissioners no less a sum than £2,500,000. There is no wish on our part, my Lords, to increase the patronage in the hands of the Bishops, although, on the other hand, I do wish it were possible for others besides the Bishops to take substantial interest in curates, who have worked for a long time in difficult positions. There is not scope enough for the reward of other merits, if it is left to the Bishops only to recompense long service. Then, my Lords, this Bill does not pronounce any opinion at all upon the principle of the sale of advowsons. It is enough, perhaps, to say here that the sale of advowsons is no part of the original principle or intent of the endowment of our Church. At the same time, the practice began very early in its history. The way in which the practice proceeded was that, first of all, advowsons went with the land. They then came to be sold with the land, and afterwards they were sold in gross or separately from the land; and, lastly, it became the practice to sell next presentations. The object of advowsons was, of course, the spiritual good of the people. On the other hand, the State and the Church of England have long sanctioned the sale of advowsons; and we have to consider that it was on the faith of both the State and the Church that private persons have invested their all in the sale of advowsons. There are, in fact, instances in which the whole property of minors and other persons has been invested in the purchase of advowsons, and people have bought without any consciousness of evil. Consequently, it is no *tabula rasa* which is before us; it is not possible for us to wipe out the sale of advowsons, since it would involve suffering and ruin to a great number of innocent families. Strong arguments have been used on both sides, and it has been proposed to remedy the mischief by allowing one more sale and no more; but the inadequacy of that proposal may be at once perceived, for it would of course follow that there would be an immediate reduction in the value of advowsons, so that this would be but a partial concession to justice; while the advowsons, if made unsaleable, would in the changes of fortune descend in lapse of time to impoverished persons, who would have lost interest both in the places and in the Church itself. Now, my Lords, I will state the objects of the Bill. First of all, its object is to stop an iniquitous traffic which is being carried on, of dealing with the advowsons of the Church as mere investments on which to make money. To that practice the Bill seeks to put an end. Let no one think that the traffic is a fair traffic. It cannot be fair, my Lords, that that which is disadvantageous to the people should be advantageous to the purchaser. For instance, there has been given in evidence a letter from a solicitor offering a living for sale, the population of which is 1,500, and it is mentioned as an advantage that there was only a small congregation. It is most unfair that the income of benefices should be augmented by subscriptions obtained from good people and from Queen Anne's Bounty, and that the advowson should then be sold at a considerably advanced price. Shocking cases of abuse under the existing law have been disclosed in evidence. In one case a returned convict who had been in Holy Orders personated clergymen in various places, passed himself off as the patron of livings, and by lending money to clergymen got them into his power and forced them to move from place to place, to the great detriment of their flocks and their own exceeding misery. We read the other day in the newspapers that St. Catherine's Church, Liverpool, was put up for sale, and was the subject of lively competition between the Ritualistic Party and the Low Church Party, and that finally it was knocked down at a high price to the former. An agent largely concerned in the sale of advowsons has admitted that three-fourths of his transactions are for immediate possession, which is against the law, and that, strictly speaking, nearly all were illegal. Cruel wrong has been inflicted again and again by putting in possession of a church an aged clergyman who is unable from age or infirmity to do his duty. When cases such as these are borne in mind, it cannot seem wonderful that a great cry should arise against the practice popularly known as the sale of souls. The conscience of the people is touched, and will not be quieted by the assurance that nothing is sold but the life-title to a certain house and ground. Nevertheless, condemnable as these practices are, wrong as it is that they should be possible or real, it is a mistake to believe that they represent a normal or even a prevalent state of things. The facts are bad. and must be rendered impossible; but they are comparatively few out of the whole mass of facts. Although it has been said in some quarters that one-third of the livings in private patronage change hands not unfrequently, the representative of Queen Anne's Bounty and others well competent to judge do not believe that this, or anything like this, is true. It must not be forgotten, either, that private patronage does not represent half the patronage in England. The Bill has reference only to those livings which are floating about, and the aim of its promoters is to get them into good private patronage, or into public patronage vested in a Board consisting half of laymen. It is obvious that compensation should be provided for those who, under sanction of Church and State, hold these properties before they are dispossessed of them. A Select Committee of the House of Commons has determined that sales cannot be stopped peremptorily, and their view has been adopted in the Bill now before the other House; and before going further I beg to be allowed to say, my Lords, how highly I appreciate the tone of the Movers of that Bill, and the honourable spirit in which they declare their readiness, whatever other opinions they entertain, to promote the reform and redress of any abuse which we may wish to remove from the Church. The same Committee has suggested that Queen Anne's Bounty should be the medium in sales, and that it should compulsorily buy, borrowing the money, if need be, and repaying it in the course of years out of the livings themselves. The Committee says that the money should be repaid in not less than 20 years. This, I beg leave to say in passing, is not the suggestion of the Bishops. It is as well to point this out, because Bishops have been said not to be good financiers, and they do not wish to be held responsible for this suggestion. We obtained the opinion of the Lower House of Convocation, of the House of Laymen, and of a third important Body, the Central Council of Diocesan Conferences, upon the proposal of the Committee of the House of Commons, and not one of them would listen to it. There seem, in truth, to be fatal objections to it. If the money were lent by Queen Anne's Bounty, even for 30 years, at 3½ per cent, the sum which would have to be paid annually out of the benefice on every £1,000 of the price paid would amount to over £54. Thus a living of £200 a-year, if sold at five years' purchase, would be reduced for 30 years to £145. If the money were lent for 50 years, the annual payment on every £1,000 would be £42, and the living would be reduced annually to £157. But what would happen if the vicarage or rectory had to be restored during the years of repayment, or if a pension had to be paid to an incumbent compelled to resign through age or illness? Why, further loans must be contracted, and the value of the living might very probably be reduced to nothing. But there is a much graver objection to the proposal of the Committee; consciences would receive worse wounds than at present; they would be offended, as by a kind of sacrilege, by the giving to a patron out of the spiritual provision for the parish what never was his. Then, as to the effect on Queen Anne's Bounty itself, I fear that the expenditure from which it could not escape might cripple all its operations. No one can estimate the number of livings which would be offered to Queen Anne's Bounty; and those which were offered would probably be offered at once. Therefore, this process would certainly cripple livings, and probably cripple the operations of Queen Anne's Bounty; and it is proposed at a time when your Lordships and the other House have already passed an Act to extend the usual period of 30 years for repayment of mortgages, because the clergy, owing to the great agricultural depression, are not able to meet the present demands upon them. The scheme, therefore, as a financial scheme would not work, and if it did it would cause more wounds to consciences than there are at present. Now, of all schemes, including this impossible one, the aim was to get rid of improper buyers. It is admitted that there are proper buyers. Let us see who could be included in that category. The Bill provides that there should be a right of pre-emption when a living is sold to persons who can show that they have a sufficient interest in the welfare of the parish. I would not wish to confine it to landowners; I should desire to extend it to others. For instance, we are familiar with great manufacturers, whose works are on the outskirts of towns, who are deeply interested in the well-being of the district, and who have shown that interest by building and endowing churches and chapels for their workpeople, among other practical ways. The right of pre-emption, it seems to me, should go to those who can show that they have a sufficient interest in the parish. Secondly, proper buyers of patronage would be public patrons, such as exist in large numbers, whether individuals, or bodies, or trusts, to the great benefit of the livings and people. Thirdly, it has been felt by the most zealous and earnest Churchmen—and there has been a consensus of those three important representative bodies of lay Churchmen—that the living should be sold to any purchaser approved by the Bishop. Now, I cannot assent to that as being a wise proposal, or one which would work practically, for I think, in the first instance, it would not be desirable that a Bishop should be personally mixed up in these transactions. It would be an invidious thing for him alone to bar purchases. Then, again, I shall not be supposed to be speaking against my cloth if I say that I think the proposal is too clerical. It is not the object of the Bill to diminish, but to extend, lay influence in the administration of the Church's affairs. I should object greatly to this Bill being made an occasion to increase clerical influence. Therefore, I think the Bishop is not the proper person to approve every transaction of this kind; but the idea that it should be approved by some local or diocesan authority seems to me a very good one. I should say, instead of any purchaser approved by the Bishop, any purchaser approved by a competent and strong Council. I believe we can form a Council easily. The purchaser should, however, be approved by the Bishop in Council, so as not to take away the Bishop's responsibility. There are other duties for which such a Council is really wanted, and I know no better way in which the laity could help in the administration of their Church. I propose, therefore, that in every diocese we should form a Council, to be composed half of laymen and half of clergymen. The Councils should not be all of the same size, but proportioned to dioceses. The clergy should be appointed as they have been for similar purposes in other recent Acts of Parliament. The laity, it is suggested, should be nominated by the Lord Lieutenant, Chairmen of Quarter Sessions, and Churchwardens of the diocese or sections of the diocese. In the Bill this Council stands first, not because it is the central object, or in any sense the backbone of the Bill, for it is not, but for drafting reasons. This Council should receive and hold advowsons, or funds contributed to the purchase of livings, or of the interest in livings. There is a general belief that if such a Body did exist funds would come in; but, quite apart from its holding any advowson whatever, or being able to purchase any advowson, what I desire is that it should be able to acquaint itself with the circumstances of any proposed transfer, and approve or disapprove of it. At the present moment exchanges are negotiated as well as sales; but an important witness before the Commission declared that exchange was a mere cloak for the worst transactions that agents engage in. We want to put a stop to all this by fixing the eye of a competent and responsible Body upon it. By this Bill, then, the right for preemption would be given to every person of sufficient interest in the parish; next, it would be capable of being given to the Council itself, if the Council thought fit to purchase it, and then to any other purchaser in the manner described. In the case of the Council having any advowson, the patronage should be exercised, not by itself as a Central Council, but by a more local body, consisting of persons belonging to the neighbourhood. It may be expected that a Local Board of this kind, with some members of the Central Council in it, to administer such patronage, would work well, and it seems a simple and practicable way of guarding against improper and scandalous transfers. At all events, I think this remedy should be tried before stronger ones. If it answers its purpose, the milder the remedy the better. If it is not sufficient no step would have to be retraced. It is an advance towards a better state of things, which could be developed. I now pass to the other precautions contained in the Bill. They are simple, and do not refer to a large proportion of cases; but they are intended to meet some great evils. The Bill provides that when a patron wants to sell an advowson the sale must be an out-and-out one, not merely of one presentation, but of all the rights which the patron possesses in the advowson. Let the purchaser take upon him all the responsibility that belongs to a patron. It is surely a repulsive thing that a man who had a great public and spiritual trust should allow it to be exercised for a sum of money. It occurs again and again, in the evidence that was given before the Royal Commission, that a great many of the undesirable men who get livings get them by sale of next presentations. So much for that precaution. Your Lordships will agree that it is desirable to close the scandal of the sale of advowsons by public auction. In an auction a patron parts with the last semblance of caring about his trust. Any bidder may have it. There is a recent instance in which an important living of £1,150 a-year was put up and withdrawn because not more than £2,500 could be realized for it. The offer of such a sum, and the contemptuous view taken of the right or trust as one not worth investing in, is disgraceful; and such a scandal should be got rid of by the abolition of sales of advowsons by public auction. We wish, further, to insure publicity in all transactions. For this purpose they should be registered within a definite time in the register of the diocese. Let all documents bearing on the subject be produced, and let the parties make a declaration that there are no other documents connected with the matter, and that there is no secret understanding. That, I think, is a fair demand to make. I am not sure whether your Lordships are aware—I was scarcely aware of it myself until I came to look into this question—that there is now no evidence at all at headquarters as to who is the patron of any living. A name is given in *Crockford*, or in *The Clergy List;* but there is no certainty as to who really is the patron. The sale takes place perhaps quite quietly, and the patron is not known until a new one starts up when the vacancy occurs. There was a case in my own diocese in which, even after the vacancy, it was not found out for some time who was the patron. All the people most concerned now know nothing of the matter. Surely it ought to be known to the parishioners and to the Bishop, and to the whole Church, who the patron of any living is. The agents who were examined before the Commission pointed out that sometimes a living was sold and resigned within a year without a suspicion arising of the connection of the two events, because no one in authority knew when the sale took place in fact. Clergymen have got into the hands of agent patrons, without knowing that the patron is anything but a clergyman or private gentleman, and the greatest mischief and misery is produced. Registration would confer a great benefit upon us all, if it were only to procure us the knowledge of who the patrons of livings are; but it would further call attention to the facts of cases such as I have just mentioned. There is another subject with which this Bill deals. At present, when a clergyman is presented to a living he comes before the Bishop to be instituted, and makes a declaration that, to the best of his knowledge or belief, he has done nothing simoniacal. It may be imagined that in this respect the mind of an unsatisfactory man is easily satisfied. I desire to replace this declaration by more simple, specific, and unevasive declarations. Let the clergyman or the patron say whether they have or have not done certain acts; the present system is simply a trap for consciences. Another point in which this Bill gives security is that of testimonials. At present a clergyman, as a matter of usage, presents a testimonial; it is now proposed that it should be a matter, not only of usage, but of law. At present these documents are not actually legal documents at all. In this testimonial the clergyman presenting it should be obliged to make a statement of what positions he has held, so that his whole history may be known. The clergy are public servants, and we have the same right to know the secrets of their public life as we have to know the public life of any other public servant. I now pass to a totally different subject—namely, the exercise of patronage. It seems to me to be essential to the good working of any scheme of patronage that the parishioners should not be so utterly ignored as they are at present with regard to the filling-up of the living; but that they should be competent to make objections to be considered by the proper authority, after notice has been given to them as to who is going to be appointed. These objections should not be considered by the Bishop alone, but by such a jury as would be afforded by the Council to which I have already referred. These complaints, if any, would thus be inquired into and judged by a body of clergy and laity; and if they were frivolous a man would come to the parish under greater advantages, after these charges had been examined into and set aside, than if they had been allowed to float about in the parish. On the other hand, a mere majority of the Council ought not to decide the matter; but if two-thirds of the Council, upon examining into the objections, affirm them, then the Bishop may refuse to institute. If there is a majority of the Council, but less than two-thirds, who affirm the objections, then it is left to the Bishop to decide; but if he should reject the man there is an appeal. This provision strengthens the parishioners to make objections. We must also strengthen the Bishop to refuse to institute an unfit person. Objections may be taken to a man for youth or for age. A man ought not to be appointed if over a certain age, and this should be the rule except where it can be shown that he is a capable man for the post. The Bishop should be able to refuse an incapable man; and the Council would act as a jury in deciding as to whether or not a man is physically or mentally incapable of performing the duties of the position. Another cause for which the Bishop should be able to refuse to institute is when a man is so burdened with debt that it is impossible for him properly to discharge the duties of his office. Bishops are all acquainted with such instances. Of what can happen this is an instance. Some years ago an important living in London—St. Giles, Camberwell—worth £2,300 a-year, came into the hands of a clergyman who was burdened with debt to the amount of £56,000, and there was no power to refuse him. He held the living from 1846 to 1879, and during that time, out of that income of £2,300, there was nothing available for the spiritual purposes of the living except £200 a-year. This would be rather more now under the present law; but the thing ought not to be possible at all. The Bishop ought to be able to refuse to institute a man who is incapable of performing his functions to the public benefit. Then, again, in the case of a public scandal, where it is destructive to a man's influence, the Bishop ought to be able to take action so as to prevent him from being accepted. Another security relates to the power of mortgaging livings. That power ought to be taken away. Again, a man ought not to be able to use his living by sequestration for debt. If a clergyman is in debt, his creditors may, by an action, get his living sequestered, the property being handed over to them, and a certain allowance only reserved for the service of the place. Again, in the case of some of those unhappy persons I have spoken of, the moment they have fallen into the hands of the money-lender they are lost; and the sequestration might go on for a man's life—obviously, if the debt is large and the living small. Let the Bill forbid mortgages, and let us pursue the system already in existence with regard to non-residents. If a man is not in residence for a whole year, or if he is not in residence for certain months in two successive years, the living is *ipso facto* vacant. If a living is sequestered, and a man cannot get the sequestration removed in one year, let it be *ipso facto* vacant. The present system makes not only corrupt clergymen, but it makes corrupt tradesmen. The tradesmen give credit because they know they can get the living sequestered. Care is further taken in the Bill that arrangements shall be made so that tradesmen, under existing sequestrations, shall not suffer in regard to goods supplied. There is another precaution still, my Lords. As to the case of lunacy, there is a very curious anomaly in our law. At present a Bishop may certify the fact of a Dean or a Canon being a lunatic, and the stall is vacant *ipso facto*. This Bill proposes that the proper authority in lunacy should certify the lunacy of an incumbent, and that then the living should become *ipso facto* vacant. I desire that it should be done with the greatest deliberation, and that when he has vacated in the prescribed manner, he should receive the same pension that he would receive as an incumbent retiring from old age. One other provision to which I beg to call special attention relates to Roman Catholic patrons. All temptation to evasions of the law should be done away. Evidence shows that there is now great temptation to sell next presentations each time, or else to put up trustees as patrons. There is a certain mistrust of Roman Catholic patrons arising out of our past history. Regard must necessarily be had to the many who entertain such mistrust; but, at the same time, justice must be done to the Roman Catholic patrons themselves. If, then, the Roman Catholic patron can satisfy the Council that the person is a satisfactory man to appoint, then the patron shall have the right to appoint him. I would make the Council and the Roman Catholic patron joint patrons, so that both could be served with notice of objection and both be able to appeal. That is in the interest of the Roman Catholic patrons themselves, and I hope that this provision will meet the wishes of the noble Viscount (Viscount Barrington) who so considerately withdrew his Motion last year on this particular question, upon my promising to introduce a measure into a more general Bill. I have made inquiry as to the opinion of the Universities. The Vice Chancellor of Cambridge has replied, so far, that the system is not held in esteem there; and the Vice Chancellor of Oxford, having consulted the Hebdomadal Board, replies that no difficulty would be felt there if a better scheme can be devised. I think that no objection will be offered from the Universities. There is only one other subject to which I have to draw attention. This is the question of donatives. There are about 100 livings in England, most of which are very small, which enjoy this singular position—that the patrons can appoint to them absolutely without reference to any Bishop or any authority whatever. They are also capable of being sold when vacant. As regards all these donatives, there is no record of their sale. There is no institution by the Bishop. The clergyman does not come before the Bishop at all, presents no testimonials or letters of Orders—that is to say, produces no proof that he is a clergyman at all. He acquires the full cure of souls without any authority to check him. The working of these donatives is singular. A Bishop has reason to know that a man wishes to resign his living for one which has been purchased, or because he has sold his own, on his part, and he refuses to accept that resignation. The man informs the agent, who says—"Never mind, I present you with my donative;" and the man then informs the Bishop that he has been appointed, and his former living is vacant. It has been said that a donative is the most powerful instrument of corruption that anyone could have. The Bill proposes to make such livings presentative like all others; but if it is desired to provide a respite for any innocent donatives which may exist—and I believe some of the larger ones particularly have never been abused—I should gladly accept a reasonable Amendment. To sum up, then, my Lords, the statement that I have made seems to present a very dark picture; but I entreat you to remember that you have only the shadows of the picture before you. The evil to be dealt with, nevertheless, is great, and excites the greatest contempt in the minds of those who believe that it represents the system of the Church. If the evils and the scandals to be removed are not very numerous, they are, nevertheless, very great. This measure, if it becomes law, will either end, or will greatly tend to end, a reproach, not only to the Church, but to our national system, in the administration of a great spiritual trust. It is a great hindrance to people who think the scandals prevail more widely than they do, and suppose that there can be little truth or honesty in the Church which allows it. Compared with the Bill before the House of Commons, your Lordships will, I think, acknowledge that this Bill goes further to preserve all that can be considered rights; and it also goes much further to obviate and correct wrongs. It is a more substantial measure by far than that before the other House. The wording and details are, no doubt, susceptible of that improvement which your Lordships are so well able to effect; and I can only say that Amendments will be most acceptable which will carry out the principle of the Bill. I now leave the Bill with confidence in your Lordships' hands; and I ask that your Lordships may accord to it a second reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.*)

The Earl of SELBORNE: I rise, as no one else rises, to express what I think is the general sense of the House—a feeling of gratitude to the most rev. Prelate for having undertaken this weighty duty, and for the manner in which he has discharged it. The House is not at this stage asked to express an opinion upon any of the particular details of the Bill. There are some of them, no doubt, presenting more difficulties than others. Perhaps I may be permitted to say that the lay Body, of which the most rev. Prelate has more than once spoken very kindly, are of opinion that the constitution of the Council is capable of improvement, and wish that it should be made more representative, and that the element of nomination should, if possible, be curtailed. That is the principal point on which they venture to suggest to the most rev. Prelate a modification of the Bill. I only now wish again to express my gratitude to the most rev. Prelate for the vigorous and efficient manner in which, upon what appear to be thoroughly sound principles, he has endeavoured to grapple with this important subject, and to remove from the Church, not only a serious evil, but also no small scandal.

The Marquess of SALISBURY: I should be unwilling to allow the Bill to go to a second reading without joining my voice with my noble and learned Friend who has just sat down in expressing our great gratitude to the most rev. Prelate for the admirable statement which he has made to us, and the great care bestowed upon the Bill. I agree with the noble and learned Earl opposite (the Earl of Selborne) that this is, perhaps, not the opportune moment to go into the details with which the Bill bristles, and that we cannot be held, in assenting to the second reading, to do more than accept the general principle, that this House is willing to remove the evils against which the Bill is framed. In view of the state of Business in the other House, I should suggest to the most rev. Prelate that he should have a small Select Committee to which the Bill could be referred. I think if we deal with it only in this House by majorities on questions with which many of those who may vote are not familiar, we shall run some danger of altering the character of the Bill in a way which will not be satisfactory to the most rev. Prelate, and it will be more efficient to refer it to a Select Committee, which need meet but two or three times in order to go through all the suggestions. It is evident that the Council of Patronage is a difficult question. I do not think the most rev. Prelate gave the House a full idea of the amount of power which he intends to confer upon it. Practically, they and the Bishop will have an absolute veto upon any nomination whatever; because they have only to be set in motion by some objecting parishioner and their power is complete. That is obviously a very considerable alteration in the law. I doubt whether the provision that the squire should have the right of presentation would be well received by the other House. The most rev. Prelate has introduced two limits to an appointment which are open to considerable doubt. I think that the provision of the Bill that a clergyman over 70 years of age should not continue the exercise of his spiritual functions, even in a small parish, would require consideration. Under the Government which we see before us, I doubt whether we are competent to say that every man over 70 is absolutely incapacitated, even from doing the duty of a small county parish. If a man is unfit to be presented to a living at 70, he is unfit to stay in it; and if the most rev. Prelate is inclined to make an enactment of that kind, it is a matter worthy of consideration whether the distinction he has drawn between appointments and continuance in a living is one he can logically sustain. Still more do I doubt the wisdom of a proposal forbidding the presentation to a living of any man until he has been three years a priest. Extreme youth, no doubt, is usually undesirable for important livings; but all newly-ordained priests are not young; and it is obvious that if a man is ordained in middle life—a thing which happens not infrequently—there can be no reason why he should not be appointed at once to a living if he is deemed fit for it. I take leave to think a hard-and-fast rule objectionable. There is only one other subject to which I wish to make allusion, and that is the question of sequestration. The evils of sequestration are terrible, and I think it is almost impossible to exaggerate them; and, considering how great are the evils arising out of them, I should be inclined to withdraw altogether the income of a clergyman under sequestration. I am not sure that the most rev. Prelate was not a little too hard in dealing with donatives, and he has attempted to deal in rather a cavalier manner with unquestioned rights of private property. I should like these matters to be carefully considered, and I believe that can better be done by a Select Committee than by the Whole House. The rights of private property must be recognized; but I entirely assent to the proposition that those rights must not be allowed to control the more serious aspect of a right foundation of a sacred trust for the benefit of the Church.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (The Earl of KIMBERLEY) said, he agreed with the noble Marquess that a Bill of this kind, consisting essentially of details, would be best dealt with by a Select Committee. Objections might be raised which might in that way be easily removed. In many cases the landowners had performed their duty as patrons as well as any class could do; but circumstances had become such that it was a very serious thing to say that Church patronage should be in the hands of the owners of one class of property.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY said, that he would be most happy to accept the suggestion to refer the Bill to a Select Committee. He hoped that the Committee would not be put off to a distant date, but would quickly meet and consider a question which had been waiting to be dealt with many years.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *referred* to a Select Committee.

"IRELAND (ELECTORAL STATISTICS) RETURN."—OBSERVATIONS.

THE EARL OF LIMERICK, in rising to call attention to the "Ireland (Electoral Statistics) Return," recently laid on the Table of the House, and to ask whether Her Majesty's Government proposed to introduce any measure for the further protection of voters and to insure the secrecy of voting? said, that this Return gave the number of registered electors in each county, city, and borough in Ireland, the number who voted at the late General Election, the number who abstained, and the number who appeared to be illiterate. The summary of the Return showed that there were in the counties 631,649 registered electors, and in the contested divisions of the counties 489,250, of whom 373,863 went to the poll, leaving 115,387 who abstained from voting, and of the 373,863 who voted no fewer than 92,882, or 25 per cent, were illiterate. In the boroughs there were 102,047 registered electors, of whom, in the constituencies in which there were contests, 77,043 went to the poll, 25,404 abstained from voting, and 5,582 were illiterates. He brought forward this subject with the object of pointing out two things—first, the great number of illiterates; and, secondly, the large number of electors who stayed away from the poll. It appeared that in East Clare, out of 10,128 electors, only 6,642 went to the poll, of which 1,186 were illiterate. Therefore, 3,486 abstained from voting. In the county of Cork there were six contests, the number of registered electors in the contested divisions was 43,604, and the number who voted was 30,047, of whom 11,557 were illiterate, and 13,557 abstained from voting. Even a more extraordinary state of things was shown in South Donegal, where the registered electors were 7,864, and the number who voted 6,466, of whom 3,358, or more than half, were illiterate. He would call attention to only one more set of figures, and that with regard to the City of Cork, represented by Mr. Parnell. In that constituency there were 14,569 registered electors, of whom only 8,376 voted, and of that number 1,297 were illiterate. It was an extraordinary thing to find so many illiterates in a city like Cork. The number of electors who abstained from voting was no fewer than 6,193. It was evident that with such a large body of illiterate voters the secrecy generally supposed to attend the Ballot did not exist, or, at all events, the illiterate voter might be influenced as if it did not exist at all. After the Elections of last year two or three letters appeared in various papers, one of which, taken from *The Times*, purported to be from a gentleman who described himself as an Irish candidate. He stated the case very clearly, observing that a very large proportion of the voters in the three Southern Provinces abstained from voting altogether, and that went far to prove that there was the greatest apathy with regard to Mr. Parnell's proposals for separation. He did not think he exaggerated when he said—"In this country 25 per cent abstained from voting." That bore out his statement. The writer went on to say—

> "As things now are, under the wonderful organization of the League, the voters are literally driven to the poll like so many sheep, and numbers of Loyalists were afraid to vote all over the country."

Of course, it might be said that that was an expression of opinion only by a gentleman who was an unsuccessful candidate; but where illiterate voters went into polling booths and saw, perhaps, their priests, and the chairman and secretaries of the local branch of the National League acting as agents for candidates, though they might be sworn to secrecy, could they help fearing that the declaration of secrecy which those gentlemen had made might not be adhered to, and that the voters would imagine that their votes would be known to all? Under the circumstances they would be pretty certain to vote in a certain way. It had even been stated that in some districts the voters had been directed to vote illiterate whether they were so or not, and in that way pressure was brought to bear upon them. He thought that the Report, to which he had called attention, showed that where there was strong popular feeling the Ballot Act was no protection to the voter, as it was intended it should be. He ventured to think that was the case in Ireland.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Earl SPENCER) said, the subject brought forward by the noble Earl was, no doubt, one of great interest and importance; and he had thought it right to endeavour to obtain information on the points raised by the Return referred to, with regard to the illiterate voters who were represented to have come forward in such large numbers at the recent elections in Ireland. Certainly, the large number of illiterate voters, as stated in the Return, was surprising. He was unable to follow the noble Earl in the particular instances he had quoted. No doubt those of Donegal and Cork were very remarkable; but he was unable to make any special inquiry with regard to any particular locality. He was unable either to confirm or to deny the statement of the noble Earl that numbers of voters were ordered to declare themselves illiterate in order that it might be known how they voted. He had, however, made inquiries upon the point; but the result of them was not sufficient to enable him to answer the noble Earl on that point. The proportion of illiterate persons in Ireland was 21·8 per cent at the last Election. At the last Census the proportion of illiterate men of 21 years and upwards was 23·5 per cent. That was in 1881, and the Election took place in 1885. It might be said, however, that, the Election having taken place in 1885, it was not fair to compare the two years. The only way of getting a fair comparison was by comparing the number of males married in 1881 who signed the register by marking with the number in 1885. In 1881 the proportion was 26·1 per cent, and in 1885 23·5 per cent. Correcting the Return of illiterates in 1881 on the same basis, the proportion of illiterate males in Ireland last year worked out at about 21·2 per cent, which was almost exactly the same figure as the proportion of illiterates who voted at the last Election. The latter figure was 21·8. That was a remarkable coincidence, and really seemed to show that the proportion of illiterates who voted was the right proportion. What he had stated, no doubt, gave the impression that education in Ireland was at a low ebb. As regarded Donegal, he was well aware that education was very low there; and there was the Irish-speaking population, who might possibly have misunderstood the directions, and have declared themselves illiterate because they could not understand the regulations, which were made in English. He had made inquiry as to the proportion of illiterates over 21 years of age in Ireland as compared with those in England, and it was certainly not satisfactory. At the same time, there had been, with respect to general illiteracy, a satisfactory improvement during the last few years. In 1841 the proportion of illiterates was 52·7; in 1851 it was 46·8; in 1861 it was 38·7; in 1871 it was 33·4; and, finally, in 1881 the proportion had fallen to 25·2. No doubt, the independence of the voter at elections was very important. He did not think he had anything more to add, except that he was not prepared to say, on the part of the Government, that they intended to introduce any measure with regard to this matter, though he might say that Her Majesty's Government would be prepared to consider any strong facts which might be brought to their notice showing the necessity for a change in the law.

THE EARL OF LONGFORD said, that the proportion of illiterate voters, according to the statement of the Lord President, did fairly correspond with the Educational Census; but the mode of taking their votes had not been noticed. It was quite obvious that when an illiterate voter was brought into a polling booth and saw three or four extreme local politicians before whom he was to state his vote in office there, although he was told that those gentlemen had made a declaration of secrecy, he could not leave the booth with the idea that his vote would remain secret, and that was the prevailing impression. There might be a difficulty about amending the law, with only the experience of one General Election conducted at high pressure; but the present state of things showed a change to be necessary.

LORD ASHBOURNE said, that when the recent Reform Bills were before the House of Commons attention was directed to the subject of illiterate voters. It was suggested from various parts of the House that it was undesirable to maintain the distinction referred to any longer—that if a person had not sufficient intelligence to sign his voting paper he ought not to complain if he lost his vote. He thought ample ground existed, and that there was much in the Return to suggest the importance for reconsidering the whole question of the status of illiterate voters. It was melancholy to reflect upon the fact that of the 373,000 voters in Ireland who voted at the last Election, 93,000, or one fourth of the total voting at the last General Election, were unable to write or read. It was the result of voting of this kind which had returned to Parliament 85 Members of a particular Party pledged to a certain course of action. It was because of the significance which had been attached to such a vote that the matter which was now being considered with such painful anxiety and interest throughout the country was brought forward.

Copy of selection from the representations made to the First Lord of the Treasury by public bodies, in response to the invitation for the free communication of views on Ireland, contained in a letter addressed by the First Lord of the Treasury to Viscount de Vesci on the 12th day of February, 1886, ordered by the House of Commons on the 16th April last to be printed, No. 117: Ordered to be laid before the House (*The Lord Ashbourne*).

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT (1875) AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the Friendly Societies Act, 1875—Was *presented* by The Lord Greville; read 1^a. (No. 99.)

House adjourned at a quarter before Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 13*th May*, 1886.

MINUTES.] — Private Bill (*by Order*) — *Second Reading*—Hampstead Heath Enlargement.*

Public Bills—*Second Reading*—Government of Ireland [181] [*Second Night*], *debate adjourned.*

Select Committee — Ulster Canal and Tyrone Navigation [141], *nominated.*

Committee — *Report* — Customs and Inland Revenue [190].

Provisional Order Bills—*Third Reading*—Commons Regulation (Stoke) * [164]; Commons Regulation and Inclosure (Totternhoe) * [166]; Local Government * [173]; Local Government (No. 2) * [174]; Local Government (Poor Law) * [172]; Local Government (Poor Law) (No. 2) * [175]; Local Government (Poor Law) (No. 3) * [176]; Local Government (Poor Law) (No. 4) * [177]; Local Government (Poor Law) (No. 5) * [178]; Local Government (Poor Law) (No. 6) * [179], and *passed.*

QUESTIONS.

EVICTIONS (IRELAND).

Mr. HARRIS (Galway, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If, on Wednesday the 14th of April, a man named Denis Creghan was evicted from his holding at Gerteen, near Moylough, in the county of Galway; if the reasons for evicting him are as follows, viz. that he divided his holding between his two sons; if 90 policemen attended that eviction, and if a head constable knocked, with a blow of his bâton, a man named Noon; if this man Noon had to be brought to the medical doctor by two policemen to get his wound dressed; if the Rev. Thomas Ronayne, P.P., Mount Bellew, appealed to Mr. Paul, the resident magistrate of Ballinasloe, for the head constable's name, for the purpose of a prosecution; if Mr. Paul refused giving the reverend gentleman the name of the head constable; if so, what steps will the Government take in the matter, or will the name of the head constable be given to the party whom he beat, for the purpose of recovering the loss he has sustained by the blow; and, if Sir Henry G. Bellew, Mount Bellew, obtained 57 ejectments at the last Galway Sessions?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The eviction in this case was with the object of preventing a sub-division of the farm. Sixty-four police. not 90, were present. When the agent was leaving, a large and threatening crowd blocked up the way, and the man Noon deliberately knocked a policeman into a ditch. When the police were clearing the way, Noon received a blow with a bâton; but the blow could not have been struck by a head constable, as neither of the head constables present had bâtons. The man was subsequently attended to by the police. The Resident Magistrate did not know who struck the blow, and declined to hold an inquiry on the subject, nor does any inquiry seem to be necessary, as the police were acting in discharge of their duty and under orders. I am informed that the number of ejectment decrees obtained by Sir Henry Bellew against his tenants is nine—not 57.

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY (Glasgow, Blackfriars) wished to ask a Question arising out of the foregoing, whether the sub-division of a farm by a tenant was not one of the things provided against by the Land Law of 1881, on account of its injurious effects upon an estate?

Mr. SPEAKER said, this was not a Question which arose fairly out of the Question on the Paper.

PERU—THE PERUVIAN BONDHOLDERS.

Mr. THOROLD ROGERS (Southwark, Bermondsey) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the intervention of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has been sought by the Chairman of the Peruvian Bondholders' Committee, with the object of inducing Her Majesty's Government, in concert with other Powers, to constrain the Chilian Government into acknowledging the claim of Messrs. Dreyfus and Co. of Paris, though that claim has been repudiated by the Chilian and Peruvian Governments; whether he has received communications from the Chilian Legation, or other Powers; and, whether he has any objection, in case he has received such communications, to lay them before Parliament?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): The Committee of Peruvian Bondholders have communicated to the Foreign Office a copy of an Agreement between the bondholders and Messrs. Dreyfus & Co. for the settlement of certain questions of priority; and they have solicited the support of Her Majesty's Government in favour of an arrangement therein proposed for the liquidation of the claims of the associated creditors of Peru, who claim rights over the guano and nitrate deposits of Tarapaca; but no application has been made to Her Majesty's Government to take steps, in concert with other Powers, to constrain the Chilian Government into acknowledging the claim of Messrs. Dreyfus & Co. The Chilian Legation in this country is for the time vacant; but the Chilian Minister in Paris and the French Government have addressed communications to Her Majesty's Government. All these documents have received the careful attention of Her Majesty's Government; but they are not prepared at present to express an opinion upon them, especially as the Chilian Government dispute the accuracy of the estimates and calculations on which the Agreement of the 23rd of March is based, and on which the proposals therein contained for a settlement are founded. The Correspondence has not yet reached a point at which it could conveniently be presented to Parliament.

Mr. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether Her Majesty's Government has made representations to the Chilian Government, in the interest of the English creditors of Peru; whether the Chilian Government has, in reply to such representations, intimated its willingness to effect an equitable settlement with the creditors of Peru, but has required, as a preliminary to any such settlement, that those creditors should agree amongst themselves as to the priority or otherwise of their claims; and, whether Her Majesty's Government has been informed that such an agreement has been practically arrived at?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): I may refer the hon. Member, for a reply to the first part of his Question, to the answer given by my Predecessor on the 4th of August last. The reply to the representation then made, and which was dated August 20, 1885, corresponds generally with the terms of the second paragraph of the hon. Member's Question. Statements have been made to Her Majesty's Government to the effect mentioned in the third paragraph of the Question; but I am not in a position to express an opinion as to their correctness.

Mr. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether, to the knowledge of Her Majesty's Government, the subjects of France and Italy have advanced claims against the Chilian Government in respect to the province of Tarapaca, the settlement of which claims the Governments of those countries have undertaken; and, whether Her Majesty's Government, as representing British interests having similar rights, has not been invited by the French Government to act in concert with them in pressing the settlement of the claims of all the Peruvian creditors on the Chilian Government?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): It is true that subjects of France and Italy have advanced claims against the Chilian Government in respect of the Province of Tarapaca; but I am not aware that the French and Italian Governments have undertaken the settlement of these claims. Her Majesty's Government have been invited by the French Government to act in concert with them in pressing the settlement of the claims of Peruvian creditors on the Chilian Government; but, as I have stated in my answer to the Question of the hon. Member for Bermondsey (Mr. Thorold Rogers), they are not prepared at present to express an opinion, or to take action in the matter.

LIGHTHOUSE ILLUMINANTS—THE CORRESPONDENCE.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether he will lay upon the Table the Correspondence which has taken place between the Trinity House, the Board of Trade, Mr. J. R. Wigham, Mr. Howard Grubb, F.R.S., Professor Barrett, Shipowners of Newcastle on Tyne, Shipowners of Glasgow, Shipowners of Greenock, Shipowners of Liverpool, Shipowners of Belfast, the Harbour Board of Belfast, and any other persons or shipping authorities who may have corresponded with the

Board of Trade or the Trinity House on the subject of the Report of the Trinity House on the experiments made by that Corporation with lighthouse illuminants at South Foreland?

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. D. ACLAND) (Cornwall, Launceston) (who replied) said: The President is anxious to lay upon the Table the Correspondence on the subject referred to by the hon. Member as soon as it is in a sufficiently complete state. As stated in his reply on the 11th of March last to the noble Lord the Member for the West Derby Division of Liverpool (Lord Claud Hamilton), the Report of Mr. A. G. Vernon-Harcourt, F.R.S., who attended the experiments at the request of the Board of Trade, has been received; but he is still waiting for Reports which have been promised from the Representatives of some Foreign Governments who were present at the experiments. When these have been received he will be prepared to lay the Correspondence on the Table.

SCOTLAND—THE ALLEGED FRAUDS BY "PRINCIPAL" NERO.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether he has received a Memorial from a number of clergymen and other gentlemen in Glasgow, fraudulently induced to entrust money to D. V. A. Nero, presently awaiting his trial for falsehood, fraud, and wilful imposition, calling attention to the long delay which has taken place in bringing the accused to trial, and asking that their money, stated to be in the hands of the Crown authorities, may be returned to them; and, whether he intends taking any steps in connection with the matter?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I did receive the Memorial referred to in the Question. The charge against Nero was fully investigated by the Procurator Fiscal, and the evidence obtained was repeatedly considered by Crown counsel, with the result that it has been found necessary to drop criminal proceedings, because the evidence available in this country was not sufficient to warrant his being brought to trial. I have no power to require witnesses to come from America to this country to give evidence; and it is very doubtful, even if American witnesses had agreed to come, their testimony would have been sufficient to establish the charge. When criminal proceedings were dropped, I had no power to detain the property of Nero. If the persons from whom he obtained money considered that they had a claim against him in respect of it, and desired to make his property in the hands of the police available for repayment, their proper course was to have instituted civil proceedings, and to have attached the property. I have no power to interfere in any such civil claims.

THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—DISTRICT INSPECTOR LEATHAM, DOWNPATRICK.

MR. A. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he can state the reason why District Inspector Leatham has been retained in Downpatrick, although he received notice of removal some time ago?

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that Question, will he allow me to ask if he is not aware that the conduct of District Inspector Leatham received the approbation of the magistrates of Ardglass and of the other districts in the locality; whether it was forwarded to the Inspector General of Police; and, whether there is any objection in the locality to Inspector Leatham except on the part of the priests; and, whether it was not taken absolutely on the ground that he was a Protestant?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I am not aware of any of the facts mentioned by the hon. Member for South Belfast (Mr. Johnston), and there is no reason why I should be, because nothing arises on this Question. District Inspector Leatham is at present in Downpatrick, but he is there simply on leave, which is granted to an officer when he is transferred; but his transfer is uncancelled.

THE RABBIT PLAGUE IN AUSTRALIA.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, If the attention of the Colonial Office has been called to the following paragraph, which appeared in *The Pall Mall Gazette* of Saturday 8th May:—

"The Rabbit Plague in Australia.

"The latest attempt to exterminate rabbits in Australia ended in failure. It was a truly infernal device, namely, the importation of rabbits suffering from the rabbit scab from Europe, in the hope that the contagion would spread among the Australian rabbits and ultimately kill them off. Professor Watson, of Adelaide University, was granted six months' leave of absence, in order that he might purchase diseased rabbits in Europe. He bought two dozen thoroughly infected with animal and vegetable parasites, and embarked on the *Caledonian* steamship with them; but, unfortunately for the experiment, they all died of sunstroke before reaching Aden, and the attempt has consequently failed. He has, however, ordered a fresh supply, and he is still in hopes that rabbit scab may be successfully introduced;"

if the statements contained in the above are true; and, if so, whether the Colonial Office will make such representations to the Government of South Australia as may induce them to adopt some other method of mitigating the rabbit nuisance in their Colony?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN) (Denbighshire, E.): I am a little surprised that the hon. Member, who is, I believe, an ardent Home Ruler, should have asked me this Question. The Colonial Office has no information on the subject of the paragraph in question; and the extermination of the rabbit plague in South Australia is essentially a matter which concerns exclusively the Government and Legislature of that Colony. Under these circumstances, the Secretary of State for the Colonies is not in a position to make the representation which the hon. Member desires, or to interfere in any other way with the action of the Colony itself.

NAVY—H.M.S. "COLLINGWOOD"—BURSTING OF THE 43-TON GUN.

SIR HENRY TYLER (Great Yarmouth) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, having reference to the recent failure of a 43-ton gun, there was any particular fault in that individual gun, or whether there was any exceptional cause for its bursting; and, if not, what steps Her Majesty's Government propose to adopt to prevent guns from being constructed and issued which are not safe or fit to be fired with ordinary service charges?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): I cannot at present say more than that a most careful inquiry will be made into the cause or causes of the failure of the gun referred to.

INLAND REVENUE—THE INCOME TAX

MR. AINSLIE (Lancashire, N. Lonsdale) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If he is prepared to adjust the imposition of the Income Tax, under Schedule (D), so as to take the average rate of Income Tax over a similar number of years as that under which profits on Mines, &c. are levied, as the figure chargeable in any particular year?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby): The effect of the course suggested would be to apply five years' average instead of three years' average to the assessment of trades and professions. This was considered to be disadvantageous to the trades and professions.

BRITISH COLONIAL WINES—THE CONVENTION WITH SPAIN.

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON (Manchester, N.E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, When and how provision will be made for the admission at the lower rate of Duty of British Colonial wines of an alcoholic strength equal to that of the Spanish wines to so be admitted under the new Convention with Spain?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby), in reply, said, he would answer the substance of the Question. The Government would introduce a Bill for the purpose of altering the scale of the wines which would come in under the 1*s.* duty, raising the scale to 30 degrees. That would not be applicable to Spain alone, but would be applicable to all wines of the same strength. He was happy to think that the new scale would be of very great advantage to the British Colonies. It would not be necessary to make special provision for the Colonies, or, indeed, for any other producers of wines.

MR. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether, under the conditions of the proposed new Commercial Convention with Spain, British ships trading with Spanish Colonies from any Country will, as regards tonnage duties or other tonnage impost, and the cargoes conveyed by them as regards the duties thereon, be placed on equal terms with vessels of any other Nation?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): Yes, Sir; as the Convention stipulates that Spain shall grant to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and to Her Britannic Majesty's Colonies and Foreign Possessions, most-favoured-nation treatment in all that concerns commerce, navigation, and Consular rights and privileges in Spain and in the Spanish Colonies and Foreign Possessions, co-extensive in amount of benefit with that already accorded to France and Germany.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—THE MILITIA REGULATIONS.

MR. TOTTENHAM (Winchester) asked the Secretary of State for War, When a revised edition of "Orders and Regulations for the Militia" will be issued?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): The Militia Regulations have been so far prepared for publication that all Orders and Circulars issued to this date have been incorporated; but before they are published I propose to have them carefully revised, in order to be certain that no portion is inconsistent with the spirit of recent Regulations on Army matters. I trust that this revision will not occupy any long time.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—HOUSE OF COMMONS—ACCOMMODATION FOR MEMBERS—LOCKERS.

MR. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.) asked the honourable Member for North-West Staffordshire, When the lockers which were promised to be provided for the use of Irish Members will be completed?

MR. LEVESON GOWER (A LORD OF THE TREASURY) (Stafford, N.W.): The lockers will be finished and placed in position in about three weeks' time from this date. There is a good deal of work connected with this service. The placing of the lockers will involve a certain amount of structural alteration in the House, which can only be carried out when the House is not sitting. No time has been lost in the matter.

IRELAND—LORD WOLSELEY—SPEECH OF MR. WILLIAM JOHNSTON, M.P.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.) asked the Secretary of State for War, If his attention has been called to the speech of Mr. William Johnston, M.P., on Thursday last, in which he stated that, if the Government of Ireland Bill passed,

> "Lord Wolseley and 1,000 other officers have expressed their determination to throw up their commissions and head the Protestants of Ulster;"

if he will inquire of General Wolseley whether there is any truth in this statement, as far as it concerns him; and, can the Right honourable gentleman inform the House as to the truth of the story generally?

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, by way of supplement to the Question of my hon. and learned Friend, If he would have any objection to producing a Return of the soldiers and non-commissioned officers of Irish birth in Her Majesty's Forces who were sentenced to death and afterwards served long periods of penal servitude for rising against laws passed by the Imperial Parliament and sanctioned by Her Majesty the Queen; and, if he will produce a Return of the number of soldiers of Irish birth in Her Majesty's Forces, and say whether these soldiers will be allowed the same impunity as their superior officers for expressions of treasonable intentions?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Gentleman must give Notice of that Question in the usual way.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): I cannot, of course, at this moment answer the Question of the hon. Member for Liverpool (Mr. T. P. O'Connor). I am not surprised that the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. T. M. Healy) has thought it right to put this Question, although the rumour to which the Question refers might, perhaps, have been left to the contradiction furnished by its own native absurdity. I am authorized by Lord Wolseley, however, to formally contradict that he has ever alluded to the subject mentioned in any speech he has ever delivered; and, as regards the Question as it affects officers of the Army generally, I must express my firm conviction that the statement referred to is absolutely and entirely devoid of truth.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I should like to ask the Chief Secretary, whether any steps will be taken in Ireland to prevent the making of seditious speeches of this character, with no apparent foundation whatever in fact, tending, as they do so much, to grave consequences?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): This is a grave Question, which I should like to have further Notice of.

INDIA (CURRENCY, &c.)—THE SILVER QUESTION.

MR. J. M. MACLEAN (Oldham) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, If any reply has yet been received from the Treasury to the Letters from the India Office, submitting for consideration the proposals of the Government of India for the solution of the Silver Question, by means of an International Agreement between the Great Powers of Europe and the United States?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby), in reply, said, that on March 22 he answered a Question on the subject put by the right hon. Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen). He then gave reasons why it was impossible, at present, to arrive at a definite conclusion or decision on this subject pending the inquiries which were now being conducted by the Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade. He hoped the hon. Gentleman would accept that as a reason why it was impossible to give a definitive answer.

MR. J. M. MACLEAN: Will the letters of the Indian Government be submitted to the Royal Commission on Trade Depression?

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I will consider that. I think there will be no objection.

THE AUSTRALASIAN COLONIES—THE CONVENTION OF SYDNEY.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If Her Majesty's Government considers the Mother Country bound to the first Resolution of the Australasian Convention, held in Sydney in 1883—

> "That further acquisition of dominion in the Pacific south of the Equator, by any Foreign Power, would be highly detrimental to the safety and well-being of the British possessions in Australasia, and injurious to the interests of the Empire;"

and, in such case, if, in order to avoid any misunderstanding upon the subject, a notification to this effect has been or will be communicated to the Ambassadors and Ministers of Foreign States?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): The Resolution to which the Question of the hon. Member calls attention is not, of course, in the nature of law, but is an expression of opinion by an important Body. It is not in itself binding in any manner, even on the Colonial Government, much less on the Imperial Government. It is, however, an expression of opinion to which Her Majesty's Government would certainly have regard, according to the circumstances, as part of the matter for their consideration in any case that may arise and might seem to touch the Resolution.

CANADIAN FISHERIES—THE "DAVID J. ADAMS."

In reply to Mr. HOWARD VINCENT,

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN) (Denbighshire, E.) said: Upon seeing the statement in the newspapers as to the seizure of the *David J. Adams*, Earl Granville telegraphed to the Marquess of Lansdowne for full information on the subject; and yesterday morning the following reply was received at the Colonial Office:—

> "Schooner *David Adams* was buying bait at Digby; did not report, as required by law, to collector, and concealed her name and port of registry. Is now detained at Digby in charge of collector, and will be tried before Vice Admiralty Court at Halifax for violation of Dominion Fishery Law of 1868, for contravention of Convention of 1818, and for violation of Customs law by not reporting to collector. Question of limit of territorial waters not raised."

The Dominion Fishery Law of 1868 means, I believe, an Act of the Dominion Parliament, passed for the protection of Canadian fishermen, and intituled the 31st *Vict.* c. 60; but I cannot say which of the numerous provisions of that Act are alleged to have been violated by the American schooner.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I wish to remind the Prime Minister that he promised to make some statement as to the continuance of the debate on the Irish policy of the Government.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that Question, I should like to appeal to him with reference to a Notice I have on the Paper for Tuesday week, in which a considerable interest is felt in the country. It is the question of perpetual pensions. It is a question which, at the request of the right hon. Gentleman, I postponed five years ago, and which I have not since had an opportunity for bringing on. 320 of the pensions affected by the Notice have been commuted during the interval.

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): Five years is a rather long period, and one is not accustomed to recognize Parliamentary debts extending back so far. The question of pensions is one which, in any ordinary circumstances, would have some weight with the Government for facilitating its discussion, being a question very germane, indeed, to the primary functions of this House. But, of course, I do not undertake to say that such a debate as that on the Government of Ireland Bill, in the event of its lasting till Tuesday week, should be suspended on account of it. We have considered, as well as we could, the whole state of the facts; and we have had to bear in mind that some Gentlemen friendly, and some, I think, unfriendly, to the Bill have expressed regret that more time had not been taken for the consideration of it. What we propose is, on and after Monday, to ask for four days a-week, or what is commonly called the whole time of the House of Commons. A special reason which prevents us from asking for to-morrow night is that, although there are a number of Notices down on the Paper on going into Committee of Supply, I am by no means sure that we could get these Notices out of the way; but, besides that, as Notices on going into Supply almost invariably terminate before the evening has very far advanced—that is, before midnight—there would be given us an opportunity of moving the second reading of the Arms Bill, in regard to which my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary has been pressed, and a Notice in regard to which ought not to remain for a long time on the Table of the House. He is quite ready to take the judgment of the House to-morrow night. It will be better not to run the risk of interrupting the debate on the Government of Ireland Bill; and, therefore, it is the intention of the Government on Monday to ask for the continuance of the debate for four days a-week until its conclusion.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL.—[BILL 181.]

(*Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Attorney General.*)

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

[SECOND NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [10th May], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*The Marquess of Hartington.*)

Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed*.

SIR HENRY JAMES (Bury, Lancashire): Sir, I trust the House will not think it unreasonable that I should wish to take some part, however unimportant, in this debate. I do not desire to do so for the purpose of making any explanations, or of giving any assurance to the House, as to the course which I have thought it right to take in relation to this great question. I feel that there is only one Member of this House to whom any such assurances are due; and I hope that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister will believe that the judgment I have exercised on this subject has been unaffected by any influences and any motives except the desire to arrive at a right and just conclusion. I hope that my right hon. Friend, too, will feel assured that I have arrived at that conclusion with regret. I have ever acknowledged the obligation of Party ties, and especially I entertain some feeling, call it loyalty or call it what you will, which makes me think that the man who

> "Spared to lift his hand against that king
> Who made him knight"

acted with no very remarkable degree of chivalry, but only as an ordinary mortal would. It is with some such feeling as this, standing as I do almost amidst my former Colleagues and my present Friends, that will make me endeavour, in the part I take in this discussion, to remove from the habits and methods of Party debate the observations I have to address to the House. I have but one object, Sir, in taking part in this discussion. It is to accept the suggestion of my right hon. Friend that we should come to close quarters with this question. I wish to grapple with it practically, and especially with the principles contained in this measure. But before doing so there are a few general subjects connected with the government of Ireland which I wish to clear away. For instance, throughout the debate on this Bill many Members, and notably my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General, have dwelt much upon the wrongs endured by Ireland in past times, upon the injustice displayed towards her by the Parliament of Great Britain and by the Parliament of Ireland itself, and have told the House of the penalties which Irishmen suffered and the grievances which they sustained through the legislation of past days. Well, so be it. With such statements I have no fault to find. I believe them to be true; I believe that Ireland has been misgoverned; and I believe England herself also has been misgoverned in times past. I recollect years ago being struck by an observation of Mr. Grattan, when he said that the student of the law who sought to trace the legislation of Ireland, and used his index for that purpose, might search with equal benefit under the head of "Ireland," or under the head of "penalty;" for you could trace the legislation of Ireland as you track a wounded man through the crowd by the blood that dropped from him. I agree with all that is so said; but what inference are we to draw from such statements? Then was then, and now is now; and we are here discussing this question in a Parliament singularly democratic in its character—we are discussing it among men who are now admitted to have the strongest feeling and desire to do justice towards Ireland; and we are discussing it in a Parliament which is led by the Minister who has shown the clearest possible intention to act in that spirit. Sir, you cannot recompense a past generation for the wrongs it sustained by inflicting injustice upon the present. We must deal with matters as we find them around us now. When I hear arguments attempted to be drawn from the fact that the Union of the two countries was obtained by means of corruption, I admit that fact to be true, and nothing can be worse than the history which can be so easily read, of an English Minister being as willing to corrupt an Irish Parliament as an Irish Parliament was willing to be corrupted by an English Minister. But what then? The Union was effected and has existed; and it would be as idle to say that arguments that were good for preventing an improvident marriage are, 80 years after the marriage has taken place, equally sound and good for obtaining a divorce, as to say that the Union between England and Ireland ought to be put an end to because it was originally obtained by corruption and bribery. It has also been remarked in this debate—and I concur with the statement—that the time for recrimination and angry observation has passed, and that we ought to accord an amnesty in reference to all that has been said in former years. Sir, I agree with that; and I will not even wait to inquire who ought to grant that amnesty and who ought to seek it. But I would suggest that it would be unwise to carry that amnesty so far into effect as to prevent our gaining the advantage of past experience. You cannot shut out of view the past; you must be guided by it. You cannot shut out the sayings and doings of men, but must have regard to them to such an extent at least as may be necessary to enable you to adapt your policy to facts, to know under what conditions you are legislating, and to whom and to what your legislation is to be applied. With this reservation, I agree that the amnesty should take full effect with regard to personal and recriminatory matters. I prefer to make no reference in this debate to the broad and general question of the benefits of the Union or of Home Rule. I will deal with this measure on the very grounds on which the Government have placed it. I will assume, hypothetically, for the purposes of this debate only, that there was reason for introducing some such measure; I will now only deal with this Bill itself, and with the conditions upon which it is admitted by its authors it ought to have been introduced, and in accordance with which conditions alone it can come into operation. Five main conditions, which I think may be reduced to three, have been attached to the carrying out of any measure that gives autonomy to Ireland. I understand my right hon. Friend to state, first, that any measure so introduced must be subject to the condition that the unity of the Empire should be preserved; secondly—though probably this second condition is only a portion of the first—that the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament should be maintained; further, that provision should be made for the preservation of social order, and also for the protection of the rights of property and for the protection of the minority—probably these two can be treated as one; and, lastly, that the measure so carried into effect shall be a real settlement in the sense of being a final settlement of the Irish Question. I will call the attention of the House — and, with great deference to my right hon. Friend's judgment, I will especially ask leave to call his attention—to the fact that this measure, if it passes into law, will not fulfil one of these conditions. I hope that I am not too presumptuous in making that statement. I have some little hope that I shall be able almost to convince my right hon. Friend himself that this Bill, as it is drawn, does not carry out the intention that he has in his mind, and does not fulfil the conditions on which he has always stated that he would alone bring in such a Bill. I take the first and second conditions—the unity of the Empire and the supremacy of Parliament — which, for reasons I shall give, substantially, for the purposes of this discussion, amount to one. I will quote a statement of my right hon. Friend, not with the object of entering into controversy upon the matter, but only to give a definition which I believe is more correct and complete than I could give as to the necessity of fulfilling those conditions. Speaking on this question at Dalkeith, my right hon. Friend said—

> "Nothing can be done, in my opinion, by any wise statesman or right-minded Briton to weaken or compromise the authority of the Imperial Parliament, because the Imperial Parliament must be supreme in these Three Kingdoms. And nothing that creates a doubt upon that supremacy can be tolerated by any intelligent and patriotic man."

Now, I ask the House to consider what is the meaning of the unity of the Empire. In relation to the subject before us, and in that sense alone am I speaking, by the unity of the Empire, of course, is meant, when so applied, the unity of Great Britain and Ireland. What does that unity mean, and from what source does it come? Unity, by virtue alone of one Crown being paramount over the Three Kingdoms, is substantially no unity. There was not much unity between Hanover and England before 1837, when the Crown of the Two Kingdoms was on one head. So weak was the Union effected by virtue of the joint crownship that the divergence of the laws of the two countries in respect to succession caused such Union as there was between the two Kingdoms entirely to disappear. The real unity of a Kingdom must depend upon the unity of its laws. I do not mean by that that there must be an identity of laws. We have different laws now in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales; and if the efforts of some of my hon. Friends around me should succeed, we shall have different laws in every county in England, at least with respect to one social subject. But what I mean is that there must be a power which can make identical laws for a Kingdom supposed to be united. It is not the identity of manufacture; it is the identity of the manufacturing power that makes the unity of a Kingdom. Therefore, when we speak of the unity of the Empire, as applied to the United Kingdom, that unity is not maintained by virtue of there being the one Crown paramount over England and Ireland. There was that junction of the Crown before the Act of Union, yet Great Britain and Ireland did not form the United Kingdom. The real Union of the Empire, as it now exists, was effected by the junction of the two Parliaments. There was no United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland before the Act of Union. That Act was the bond which made these Kingdoms united Kingdoms. That Act consisted of six Articles. There were five of them which did not create and did not effect a Union of the United Kingdoms. The First Article is declaratory, that they shall be united, without saying how they were to be united. The Second Article declares that the succession to the Crown shall remain as it is. The Fourth refers to the Irish Peerage.

The Fifth Article unites the Churches, and that Article no longer exists. The Sixth Article deals with trade and navigation only; but the Third Article remains:—

> "That it be the Third Article that the said United Kingdom be represented by one and the same Parliament, to be styled the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland."

As long as that Parliament exists we shall have the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. If that United Parliament is taken away, the Parliament which joined these two Kingdoms will be taken away. The Prime Minister has said that he does not seek to repeal, but only to modify, the Act of Union. My right hon. Friend is perfectly accurate in saying that he does not seek to deal with the remaining clauses of the Act of Union; but the draftsman who has to deal with this Bill must sooner or later schedule the 3rd clause of the Act of Union as one that is to be repealed by this measure. We are not asked to modify, but to repeal that clause, and to say that there is not to be any longer a United Parliament for England and Ireland. The moment that is done, that which constitutes the real Union between the two countries will be removed. What does the supremacy of Parliament mean? Of course, the supremacy means the power of making laws over the whole of the Dominions that can be affected by the Parliament's jurisdiction. And I now wish to ask whether it is the intention of the Government, if this Bill passes into law, that the Parliament, which will not be the Imperial Parliament as now existing, but will be the British Parliament, or, as my right hon. Friend terms it, the Parliament on this side of the water—whether that Parliament will have the power of making laws for Ireland? I must confess, when I read this Bill, I had no doubt upon the question. I, of course, thought it was intended to give the exclusive power of legislating for their home affairs to the Irish Parliament; but some words which fell from the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, whilst my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale was speaking on Monday, raises some doubt on the question. By the 2nd clause of this Bill power is given to the Irish Legislative Body to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of Ireland, and by any such law to alter and repeal any law in Ireland. That is the whole pith of the Bill; and by law in Ireland must be meant not only any existing present law, but any law enacted in the future. If the British Parliament, which will cease to be the present Imperial Parliament, is to have a superior power over the Irish Parliament, and can repeal the laws made by the Irish Parliament, where will be the value of this Bill to Irish Members? The Government can, in one sentence, tell the House whether the meaning of the Bill is that the Irish Parliament is to be controlled by the British Parliament, or is to have an independent power of legislation. Is the Irish Parliament to have the power of altering every law in Ireland; and, if so, are we to have this spectacle—namely, that the Irish Parliament is to pass a law which the British Parliament will repeal, and that the Irish Parliament will repeal that repeal, and so on, so that we shall go on playing the ball over the net backward and forward for all time? From the words which are contained in the 37th clause of the Bill I should certainly draw the inference that the right to legislate over the excepted subjects only was reserved to the British Parliament. But if the British Parliament is to have a superior power over the Irish Parliament in that respect, what will be the value of this Bill to the Irish Members? But it is useless for me to discuss the exact meaning of what is in this Bill. It is not as though we were discussing the meaning of an Act of Parliament. This is only a Bill not yet carried. Cannot a Secretary of State or the Attorney General tell us whether it is intended by the Bill that the British Parliament shall have control over the Irish Parliament or not? If it is intended to retain the supremacy of the British Parliament it must be so declared in the Bill, and the matter ought not to be left in doubt. The same point arises in relation to the Colonies, in which case the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament has always been reserved. By the Colonial Act of 1865 it was enacted that any Colonial law repugnant to the provisions of any Act of Parliament extending to any Colony should be read subject to such Act, and that to the extent of such repugnancy the Colonial Act should remain absolutely void and inoperative. There is, in effect, a similar provision with regard to India in the Act of 1861. That is the course, therefore, that will have to be taken with regard to this Bill if it is intended to reserve the same right of control by the British Parliament over the Irish Parliament. For the absence of such now usual express reservation will raise the presumption that no reservation is intended. It will be useful to know what will be the effect upon the Irish Members if the Government were to state that it is their intention to allow them to make such laws as they may think right, but that the power will be reserved to the Members of the British Parliament to repeal those laws according to their will. The result would be, of course, that there would be no one in the British Parliament to defend the views of the Irish electors. That, therefore, is a condition to which, I believe, the Irish Members will never submit. By the silence of those who can correct me if I am wrong, I presume that it is the intention of the Government that this supremacy of the British over the Irish Parliament shall not exist, and that the Irish Parliament shall have free power to govern their country in relation to their own affairs. That being so, we shall have no power of governing or making laws for Ireland, and Ireland will be the only portion of Her Majesty's Dominions over which the British Parliament will have no complete legislative control. [*Cries of* "No!"] Of course, I am not speaking of the power which the British Parliament is to retain of legislating on certain subjects. Supremacy of Parliament means complete supremacy. A man does not maintain a roof over his house if he only covers half of it; and so we are not maintaining the supremacy of the British Parliament if we do not give it the power of making such laws as are deemed necessary on all subjects for the government of Ireland. Therefore, if we give up this power of complete legislation for Ireland—I repeat it—we shall have taken away the power of the British Parliament—call it Imperial if you will—which exists in relation to every other portion of the Queen's Dominions to impose laws upon the Queen's subjects. What is the effect of so doing? I think my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will agree with me that if once we do that we, in one sense, render that country, in respect of which we cannot legislate, a foreign and independent State. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER dissented.] I gather that my right hon. Friend differs from me. I admit that my right hon. Friend is much more likely to be right than I am. Of course, I may have made a mistake; but will my right hon. Friend allow me to give him my authority? I know of no difference between right of legislation and abstract right of legislation. A right is a right whether you exercise it or not. But the authority which I will read to the House says—

> "As a matter of abstract right, the Mother Country has never parted with the claim of ultimate supreme authority for the Imperial Legislature. If it did so it would dissolve the Imperial tie, and convert the Colonies into foreign and independent States."

That was written, it is true, by an anonymous writer, and, of course, I will not say that my right hon. Friend is bound by it; but that anonymous writer signed himself "Historicus." This quotation is from a letter which appeared on the 1st of June, 1876; and I have always understood that it was an authority to which I could look with the greatest confidence. But my right hon. Friend now states that he differs from the proposition I made.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby): I beg my right hon. and learned Friend's pardon. I do not differ in the least from his proposition. What I said to him was—"Do you say that at the time of Grattan's Parliament Ireland was a foreign State?"

SIR HENRY JAMES: The point is not worth a moment's controversy; but I thought he said—"I entirely differ." I say, Sir, that I am content to take my stand upon the *dictum* that if you give up the abstract right—and I make no distinction between abstract right and right—of legislation, the country over which you give it up becomes, in one sense, an independent and foreign State—at least so "Historicus" says. There is no difference between abstract right of legislation and right of legislation; and you must exercise the right if you have it, and that gives you the supremacy which you dare not state in this Bill you possess. This right you possess, and expressly reserve, in regard to the Colonies; and I ask Irish Members to consider this—are they going to leave this British Parliament with this right in it, so that it might be exercised at any moment to annul the Acts of the Irish Parliament? It does not occur that the right is constantly exercised in the case of the Colonies, because they are friendly and are far distant; but Ireland is in a very different position. Can we suppose that the minority in that country will not bring their grievances here and ask for redress? I hold in my hand a statement made by the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. W. O'Brien) not long ago, which will illustrate the state of things that would occur. He said—

> "If our struggle is severe, the rewards and the prizes are very great—prairie value of land for the farmer, and less than prairie value for the labourer."

MR. W. O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.): I never said it in my life.

SIR HENRY JAMES: It appeared so reported in *United Ireland*, which I believe is edited by the hon. Member. I only use it for the purpose of showing from a good authority what is likely to happen if an Irish Parliament is carried into effect. Whatever Land Law we pass can be repealed the next day by the Irish Parliament? If the Land Bill of the Government were to be passed here the Irish Parliament could repeal it as soon as that Parliament comes into existence. Will one of my hon. Friends allow me to refer to his position for a moment. Suppose some land in Galway is taken at prairie value? Do you not think the hon. Member for Glasgow would come to that House and say—"Here, within the Queen's Dominions, over a portion of the Empire in which the supremacy of your Parliament is maintained, it appears to me, and probably to you,. that an act of injustice and spoliation has been committed; you have the power to remedy it, and to restore to the owner the value of his property, and I ask you to exercise such authority?" What would then become of the abstract right? We should have a right, and it would be our duty, if we had the right, to exercise it. There would be nothing to prevent similar appeals being brought here day after day from Ireland. The objection that this would be a mere abstract right is of no avail, as it would be impossible for us to avoid listening to complaints made to us to exercise our superior power. It ought to be stated in this Bill whether this power exists or not. If you allow this power to remain, then I say that the result will be that collisions of the most dangerous character with the Irish Parliament will occur. But if the right is claimed it should be stated in the Bill, and if given up that should be stated. If it is given up, then, says the anonymous writer whom I have quoted, Ireland would be placed in the position of a foreign and independent State. On this ground alone, if this Bill remains as it is, the supremacy of Parliament is gone. I turn to another phase of the supremacy of Parliament—I mean of the sovereignty of Parliament. I hope I shall not be thought pedantic when I say that the sovereignty of Parliaments is said to depend upon many conditions; but I think they can be reduced to two. A Sovereign Parliament, or, as the foreign expression is, a Constituent Parliament, must be subject to two conditions. Such a Parliament must always have the right to alter its own fundamental existence—that is, it must be able to alter and remodel its own constitution. Secondly, it must be subject to the control or decision of no man or body, so as to enable such man or body to say that the authority of Parliament has been exceeded. Those two conditions must exist in an Imperial Parliament such as we now have, with no written constitution; but, having, as a writer on the Government Benches has said, a flexible constitution, it can alter the term of its own existence. That power now exists, and we are at present exercising it. It is not sufficient to make a Parliament a Sovereign Parliament that it should possess powers of legislation. It is not unusual for Railway Companies to have powers to pass laws for the management of their own internal affairs; but they have no power to alter their constitution. So the Parliament of Ireland, if it comes into effect, will be, in that sense, not a Sovereign Parliament, for it will have no power to alter its own constitution. There is also another point. There must be, as I have said, no body—no Judge or Judicial Body, which can ever say to a Sovereign Parliament—"You have exceeded your jurisdiction and are acting unconstitutionally." I will give an instance. If this Parliament was to pass a law that no wills made in France should be valid unless attested by four witnesses, however absurd it might be to attempt to legislate for French subjects in France, the Judges here would have to obey and administer that law, and would do their best to carry the judgment of the Legislature into effect. Of course, in France we should see the way in which the French Judges would treat so absurd an Act. But the Act would be good here, and the Judges here could not say that the enactment was beyond the power of Parliament to effect. That exemption from review does not exist in relation to a subordinate Parliament. The question whether a subordinate Parliament has or has not exceeded its jurisdiction is one to be decided by a judicial tribunal. I maintain, even if the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament shall be held to remain with the British Parliament, that when this Bill comes into effect you will be giving up sovereignty in this respect—that the British Parliament will be unable of itself to alter its own constitution. If hon. Members look to Clause 39 of the Bill they will find that the so-called Imperial Parliament will be the British Parliament, but that in order to exercise its full sovereign right it will have to call back a certain number of its Members, and so become a different Body. Now, Sir, comes the proposition, which I venture with great deference to call the attention of the House to, that the British Parliament cannot alter its own constitution if this Bill becomes law without recalling the Irish Members. The British Parliament alone would be powerless to alter its constitution. I submit that if that is done there is no man who will say here that there is power for the British Parliament to act in the absence of these Irish Members. If it be contended that the Irish Members are to have this Act repealed in their absence, and their right to a separate Parliament taken away without their consent, I think I can give good reason why that cannot be so. This Bill has been called a Treaty of Peace. Well, in one sense it is a Treaty. But, dealing with it from a legal point of view, we may more properly call it a legislative contract. We have constant examples of contracts in the Statute Book, especially in relation to private Acts of Parliament. The Irish Members say they are willing to leave this Parliament. At present they are joint tenants of the Chamber, but are willing to give up their estate in this House. They go away on the terms that they shall legislate for themselves in Ireland, and that if ever we should wish to take that power away from them we shall recall them here. Therefore, we shall not have the power to alter the constitution of our Chamber, so far as it is affected by this Bill, without calling these Irish Members back. I will concede rather than argue the question that, technically, if the British Parliament acted without the Irish Members its legislative acts could not be questioned in England. Whatever we do, a Judge sitting in England or Scotland would have to obey us. But if we took that course the effect of it, from the mere legal aspect of the case, would probably have to be determined in Ireland by an Irish Judge who would not be answerable to this Parliament, but only to Ireland, and would say—"You have unconstitutionally repealed the Act which constituted the Irish Parliament; the Irish Parliament is passing good laws for Ireland; I will obey those laws, and you have no right to take away the powers of the Irish Parliament in the absence of their Members." Then we should have an actual conflict, and I see much reason for contending that the Irish Judge would be in the right and that we should be in the wrong. But I prefer to deal with the question constitutionally from a moral aspect. Dare we, in the face of the Irish nation, or in the face of our own people, break this contract, and, having said that the Irish Parliament shall exist till the Irish Members come back to the British Parliament and have their rights taken away from them, depart from the terms of that contract? It would be so unconstitutional in the sense of being immoral, and so immoral in the sense of being unconstitutional, that we should have got into a region where physical force would be a better weapon than dealing with the subject so basely. Therefore, I submit to the gravest consideration of hon. Members whether, if we pass this 39th clause, we do not give up fundamentally the power of reconstituting the Parliament, as it exists, without recalling the Irish Members, and that, consequently, the British Parliament will cease to be a Sovereign Parliament? I have endeavoured to point out how you may become subject to the decision of Judges of another tribunal, who would at least assume power to determine that what we have done is outside our power; and this would bring us into the condition of being treated and considered as an inferior and a statutory Parliament instead of a Sovereign and supreme Parliament. Having pointed out these facts, I now ask the Government to consider, after they have obtained the guidance of legal assistance, whether it is not the fact that the supremacy of Parliament over Ireland would be gone, and that the sovereignty of Parliament would depart from us if we accept this Bill? I ask my right hon. Friend to consider whether this first condition which he has imposed upon himself does not fail, and whether there must not be a reconsideration of this measure? I now pass to the second condition imposed upon this measure by the Prime Minister. He has undertaken to provide for the safety of those who would remain in Ireland—to provide for social order, and also to protect the minority and place them in a position of security. I know of no subject which ought more seriously to engage the attention of hon. Members. Has due provision been made for the protection of the minority in Ireland? Sir, that minority is entitled to our especial care. Whoever they may be, whatever position they may be placed in, they are there by virtue of our protection, and of our legislation which planted them there. That places upon us the obligation of not deserting them. The Prime Minister will forgive me if I remind him that we have also directly of late tended to produce the position they now occupy. It was not so very long ago they were chided and reproved for not having more conspicuously, actively, and physically ranged themselves upon the side of law and order. I say they ought to be within this Parliament, and, before the mischief is done, the subject of our special care. I venture to speak very freely whether I please men or not, and I say that we ought, every one of us, to condemn those foolish, those wicked, rumours and statements which are made about Ulster—that the minority in Ireland will find resort in arms, and that they will be right in so doing. Unreservedly I declare that any man who by word or act encourages such an idea is half a traitor. We have seen action taken against unconstitutional Monarchs, and when such action has been successful we have applauded it; but the proposition now, as I understand it, which these misguided men are using in Ulster, is that if this House should agree to a legislative measure, and if the House of Lords should assent to it, and the Queen should will it, that measure should be resisted by force of arms. It is said that such physical force would be used by loyal men, and in one sense so it might be; but is it not apparent to everyone that to use arms against a Constitutional Sovereign acting in accordance with the will of Parliament, and to whom you say you are loyal, is to make treason doubly dyed? Here, in this House, in anticipation, every man ought to endeavour to protest against a possibility of such an outbreak. One word I may, perhaps, be allowed to say on the other side of this question. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland used words unintentionally, no doubt, and not expressing his real meaning, but which grated upon the ears of many of us when he told us that these provisions or some such provisions should be accepted lest we should reap the consequences, because the dynamiters and assassins would be disappointed and would take to their work if they did not get this Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): What I said was exactly the contrary. I said the dynamiters and assassins will be delighted if you reject the Bill.

Sir HENRY JAMES: I have no wish to misquote my right hon. Friend; but I think the impression generally produced by his words was that we were told to prepare for the consequences. I think I am right in stating that my right hon. Friend has always said that we have, at least, consolation in the reflection that if we should be giving too great power or freedom to the National Party in Ireland, we have always the strength of England with its Army and its Navy behind us. I would ask my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to consider whether it is not dangerous to ask Members of this

House to be careless in the exercise of their legislative functions, because if they make an error they may fall back upon force of arms? It is possible that recourse to arms may cause the employment of the Forces of the Queen against her most loyal subjects. Is it not possible that that may be so when we hear of a rising against the Queen's authority? Never would there be a greater calamity to a country, and a greater disaster to statesmen, than that which would occur if the Queen's troops should have to fight against the most loyal of her subjects in Ireland. Sir, I say that this view ought to make us very careful to afford the true answer to such possibilities by making a strong legislative enactment here for the protection of these minorities. What will be the protection of this measure? We listened to the eloquent words of the Prime Minister, who predicted a future when a minority representing wealth, landed interest, position, intelligence, with peace restored in Ireland, would return to their occupations, and exercise again the social influences they had previously possessed. Let us hope that will be the result. But what stability would such influences possess? Suppose some man prominent among his fellows should affect the imagination, so easily affected, of the Irish people, should earn their gratitude, and gain their confidence, and should then appeal to the masses of the people against those who represent the social position and power and intelligence of the country—[An Home Rule Member: Say in England.]—representing them as having been oppressors and opponents of every true reform, what would then become of those social influences? They would be swept away as easily as the acrobat sweeps away the flimsy paper from before the hoop through which he jumps. What defence is given by this Bill—is it legislative defence—for these minorities? Why, Sir, the only defence we can find lies in the composition of the two Bodies. But I know not any guarantee that the minority will procure a majority in the second Body, when the landlords have been bought out, or those who have not been bought out have left the country. I am not sure that the national influence is not so great that it would command a majority in both Orders. Even if not, there will only be a three years' veto. At the end of three years there will be no protection by virtue of the second Order having the veto power. Well, Sir, what protection do we get by virtue of the Executive? The Executive is to be, no doubt, still the Lord Lieutenant primarily; but he will be guided by the Ministry of the majority; the Army that you are leaving in Ireland for the purposes of protection will, unless there be a rebellion, always act under the control of the Executive. The police will actually be in the hands of the Executive too. If you turn to the Bill you will see that, with the exception of two years, in the case of the Dublin Police, the Constabulary from the very moment the appointed day arrives will, no doubt, be managed by the Lord Lieutenant—[Mr. Parnell: Aided by this House.]—but still with the advice of the Executive; and that Constabulary need not exist for one day after this Act comes into operation. There is every inducement given under the Bill for boroughs and other localities to have their own police. Therefore, you leave the police, if they remain at all, to be governed by the Executive. The Judges, too, will have to administer the law, and they may be made elective at once. They might exist under any conditions that this new Parliament chose to impose. Therefore, in the use you can make of the military, in the action of the Judges and the police, there will be but one power alone, and that the power of the majority, represented and controlled by the Executive. I ask the House to consider do they find here any protection whatever for the Loyal minority? Sir, I feel that we ought almost to plead their cause, and demand that they should not be deserted and left to their fate. We ought not to incur the risk of having to appeal to military force; and we ought now, before this Bill leaves the House, to ascertain where those substantial safeguards can be found, without which we shall not be doing justice to these loyal men in Ulster and elsewhere. We cannot forget that we have been their friends and they have been our friends, and we ought to protect them now. I now come to the consideration whether this measure can be regarded as a final measure—I mean in the sense of a real settlement. Hon. Members from Ireland have stated that they accept it as a final measure. I read this morning that a conspicuous Liberal Member of the House has stated that the Leader of the Party opposite is willing to accept anything; but we have to ask whether, even if the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) is willing to accept anything, the Irish nation is equally willing to accept anything? I hope, for its own sake, it is not. We have heard it said that there should be an amnesty for the past. But there is none of us who has not read, not only the statements of every prominent Member of the Nationalist Party in this House, but the statements of eloquent men who are dead and gone, and who made one claim for Ireland, which was that she should be a nation.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): She is a nation.

SIR HENRY JAMES: If she be a nation, what is wanted more? I understood that the claim was that Ireland should be an independent nation with its own Flag, and that the Flag she wished to fight under——

MR. O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.): If we have to fight.

SIR HENRY JAMES: I always understood that that Flag was to be some other than the Flag of England. Will the hon. Member for Cork forgive me, as he says Ireland is a nation, if I ask him whether this is the nation which Irishmen have meant, when under this Bill her Legislature will be brought lower than that of any Province of any Colony of the Crown, when Ireland will have no Flag, no Army, no Navy, when she cannot deal with her foreign affairs, or with her trade and commerce, or even protect her Coast? I cannot believe that the Irish nation will accept this as a final settlement. That this will be most useful to them as a vantage ground from which they can wage their warfare must be admitted. That the powers that lie beneath the hon. Member for Cork, the powers that are stronger than he, the powers that, may be, will rule Ireland will accept this measure as a final one I cannot for one moment believe. I believe that the echoes of the voices of the dead would mingle with the voices of the living in protesting against this Bill being treated as the final result of the aspirations of Irishmen to form one of the nations of the earth. It may meet the opportunism of the day for certain purposes, but can never satisfy the wishes of a generous people. We hear words of gratitude for this measure; we heard words applied to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, in which I most sincerely concurred, when hon. Members opposite said he was a statesman who had acted beneficently to Ireland, and that he would crown a public life of 50 years of acts of justice by giving this great measure to Ireland. Well, those 50 years were nearly run last November. But up to that time hon. Members from Ireland never used one word of gratitude to him. They certainly never expressed the confidence in the Liberal Party which they profess now. There was a statement signed on November 23, on behalf of the hon. Member for Cork, in which there was an expressed request that no votes might be given to the followers of the right hon. Gentleman, except to those of them who had given proof that they did not belong to the most servile and venal herd who ever answered to the Whip of the Minister or to the mandate of the Caucus. Probably hon. Members will now think that the herd was not so servile as they thought last November, and that the mandate does not command such obedience as they expected. I must confess that I would, if I could, accept the faith in which I am told I ought to walk. But, unfortunately, when I call for that faith it will not come. I look upon the sayings of men who have been dead many years as if they were the sayings of to-day; and I do believe their object and aim—and not unreasonably—was to obtain far more than this measure represents—to obtain, in fact, total separation. We shall give unintentionally an opportunity of securing that separation if we now pass this Bill. Everyone is met with an argument against which I protest. It is an argument that, whether this plan be a bad one, we who object to it ought to say what is the plan which we would substitute. That throws an unfair responsibility upon each and every Member in this House that he ought not to bear. Speaking to the extent to which a person ought to speak, I would say that there is much hope yet for Ireland within the House in its present mood and with its present sense of justice for Ireland. Under the new conditions under which we exist, with the new power exercised by the Irish Members here, I would still hope that without this great departure there might come results for the better government of Ireland. But against this argument of what is your alternative plan I will venture to refer to what occurred some 200 years ago. I quote this incident for the purpose of showing that the argument is an old one, and has been tested before. The incident arose out of a discussion as to how the Army of the King should be maintained without calling Parliament together. Clarendon describes what occurred as follows:—

> "The old argument 'that there could be no other way found out' was renewed, and urged with more earnestness and confidence, and that they who were against it might be obliged to offer their advice what other course should be taken; and this was often demanded in a manner not usual in that place, as a reproach to the persons. His Majesty himself, with some quickness, was pleased to ask the Chancellor what he did advise, to which he replied, 'that if in truth what was proposed was in the nature of it not practicable, or, being practised, could not attain the effects proposed, it ought to be laid aside that men might unbiassedly apply their thoughts to find out some other expedient.'"

That was the saying of Clarendon; and I ask now if, under the circumstances, this Bill having been introduced into this House, necessarily under great pressure and, perhaps, with not quite that consideration that ought to have been given to it, and if the Bill should be found impracticable, or if carried into effect would not attain the object sought, would it not be wise to "lay it aside that men might unbiassedly apply their thoughts to find out some other expedient?" I have now said what I have to say at this stage of the Bill. I have purposely avoided dealing with many details by which I might have shown that the measure was unworkable. I am aware that it has now become a trite saying—everyone says it—that we have come to a parting of the ways, and must make our choice. So far as I am concerned, there were two paths open to me. There was one which offered many attractions for me. My old Colleagues had gathered upon it, and although their language has somewhat changed since the days of our association, yet I think I could have recognized their voices, and it is possible a word or two of welcome may have fallen upon my ear. I should, too, have had the privilege—to me the great privilege—of following—with, however, an unequal step—a Leader whose later triumphs, if I am not permitted to say I have shared, at least I have been allowed to witness. But I had to look beyond these inducements. I had to look to what this path leads, and, as far as my erring perception goes, I can discover that it leads to nothing except confusion and chaos—

> "Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws."

So, Sir, I have turned to another path, dark and uncertain, I admit, and rendered more dangerous and difficult by the acts of men who ought to have guarded it more carefully. Yet I declare that, through the shadow that envelops it, men who have venerated our Constitution may trace landmarks sufficient to guide us to ends and results which will strengthen yet the power of a people and maintain untouched the Empire of our Queen.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): It is not an easy task for anyone to undertake to follow my right hon. and learned Friend, whose lucid style and charm of manner have riveted the attention of the House; and I feel that, as I am unable to vie with him in eloquence, so I am unable to deal with the first part of the arguments which he addressed to the House. I am but an uninstructed layman, and unqualified therefore to analyze the elaborate Constitutional argument to which we have listened. But there were one or two things in the course of his speech which were, at any rate, within the scope of my comprehension, and which startled me not a little. My right hon. and learned Friend, speaking of the unity of the Empire, laid down the principle that unity of law was essential to the unity of Empire; and then he went on to state this as a fact, to which he demanded our assent—that there was no united Empire till 1800, when the Act of Union was passed.

SIR HENRY JAMES: Will my right hon. Friend forgive me? I said no United Kingdom.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Oh, no; my right hon. and learned Friend was speaking entirely of a united Empire. If, however, he said, or meant to say, United Kingdom, then he admits that there was a united Empire with separate Parliaments. I do not know whether he means us to believe that Ireland in 1782 was a foreign country. Then my right hon. and learned Friend went on to speak of the supremacy of Parliament, and I was not a little puzzled when towards the end of his speech I saw the other side of the shield. He said that if the Bill becomes law the British Parliament will part with many of its powers, will be shorn of its dignity, and will no longer have that commanding authority which it now has. These powers, in that case, we may assume, will have gone to somebody; but when the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) interrupted and said—"Ireland is a nation," my right hon. and learned Friend said—"Are you content to take this poor, shrivelled, and degraded Parliament?" There is a quart of wine somewhere, and it is going to be put into two bottles, and in the two bottles there must be all that there was in the original bottle. My right hon. and learned Friend asked us to seek the assistance of high, legal minds upon the subject. I am able to reassure him upon this point. We have had the best legal advice we could obtain since we lost the advantage of getting the advice of my right hon. and learned Friend; and we are assured that the supremacy of Parliament is adequately maintained by this Bill. Then my right hon. and learned Friend spoke of the terrible future awaiting the minority in Ireland. He conjured up a frightful picture, showing that all the lower classes would rise against the minority and sweep them from the country. But why should that not happen in England? On a point like this it is impossible for me to meet my right hon. and learned Friend on equal terms, because we are not proceeding on the same foundation at all. I decline to proceed, and we have never professed that we have proceeded, in this legislation on the expectation that the Irish people will exhibit none of the virtues and all the vices of the human race. We do not believe that the moment they are left to themselves they will be guilty of all those enormities to which reference has been made. If, unfortunately, there exists in that country hostility and jealousy between different classes and creeds, I venture to say that that is due, not to the Irish people, but to the system under which they have been governed. My right hon. and learned Friend has not departed in a great part of his speech from that which has been a peculiarity in all these debates. It is this. Little or nothing has been said by the opponents of the Bill against its main object and principle. The youngest Member of the House knows what are the different stages of a Bill. The Motion for introduction only raises the question whether the Bill is deserving of the consideration of the House; the second reading deals with the principle of the Bill; and in Committee the particular method in which the principle is to be applied is decided. But in the present instance this order has been inverted from the first. On the Motion for leave to introduce the Bill, we had a debate turning wholly on the provisions contained in particular clauses; and, therefore, it is not surprising now we have come near to the legitimate time for discussing details that the same course should be pursued. While this is true, there never was a case in which the transcendant importance of the main object of a Bill so completely absorbed the details as in this case. It is not too much to say that the fact that the responsible Government of the Queen has proposed to Parliament the establishment of a statutory Parliament in Ireland, with full control of Irish affairs, is the gravest and most startling event in the political life of any man among us. [*A laugh.*] There is an hon. Gentleman opposite who laughs. Does he think it is with a light heart and in a wanton spirit this thing has been undertaken? Why, Sir, it is a totally new departure, the supreme importance of which I should be the last man in the world to underrate. But could it have been imagined or conceived that when it came to be proposed it would be met, not on the ground that it is not the right thing to do, but because it is done under wrong conditions and in a wrong way? I am, of course, aware—I do not ignore the fact—that there are many Members in the House, and on this side of the House, who object to any large extension of Home Rule to Ireland. They constitute the first class of opponents to the Bill. A second class are those who are opposed to this scheme because they have rival schemes of their own. And a third class are those who are ready to approve the main purpose and intention of the Bill, but who yet object strongly to certain points in it which they find to be contrary to some necessary principle in politics. What I wish to point out is that the first two classes are fighting almost exclusively under the shield and with the weapons of the third. We hear little even from the Benches opposite of irreconcilable hostility to Home Rule; we have not heard a syllable to that effect from any authoritative source on that side. The rival schemes, so far as they were disclosed, have been summarily withdrawn from our notice; and it is the details of this scheme which engage all the ingenuity and, in some cases, the animosity of those who object to our proposal. What a testimony is this, as it seems to me, to the essential soundness of its basis, and to the extent to which the conscience and instincts of the nation have been moved by the demands of the Irish people! But my noble Friend behind me, in moving the rejection of the Bill, justified his dwelling upon details. He said that the essence of this question—whether it is wise and politic to grant a Legislative Body to Ireland—lies in those details; and in illustration he dwelt upon the difficulties attending the retention or non-retention of Irish Members in this House. I should prefer to invert the practice followed by the noble Lord, and, instead of arguing from the question of the exclusion or inclusion of Irish Members down to the wants of Ireland, I will endeavour to argue from the condition and wants of Ireland and the necessities of Irish government up to such questions as the inclusion or exclusion of Irish Members, the difficulties of which, of course, I admit. I would not commence to build from the details down to the foundation; but I should prefer to lay the foundation, and on that to build upwards to the details. I make bold to say that if this course is followed, if we consider the real condition of Ireland and of Irish opinion, and start from a few deductions immediately drawn from those considerations, we shall be brought inevitably and without escape to the conclusion which is embodied in the Bill. I do not found myself on my experience as Chief Secretary for Ireland, because it lasted too short a time to enable me to speak with direct personal authority of any weight; but at least the knowledge I gained enables me to judge of the value of subsequent events. I may be allowed to say that while I was at the Irish Office things were sufficiently critical and anxious to let me see the real dangers and difficulties of our position, while, at the same time, there was not such an extent of disorder as to disturb my impartiality or equanimity. In this House, during the time I was Chief Secretary, although there was occasionally an outburst of extreme intensity of spirit on the part of hon. Members opposite, yet they treated both the House and myself at that time with comparative forbearance. But between June last, when our responsibility ceased, and the end of the year, two events of great importance occurred which go completely to the root of this matter. The first of these was the course taken by the late Government in renouncing any intention of renewing any part of the Crimes Act or furnishing any substitute for it. I admit at once that that step would have been justified, and amply justified, if it had been part of an intelligent and consistent policy. In that case it would have been the expression of their conviction of the futility of all the efforts we had been making for a great number of years to check by penal restrictions the growth of national feeling in Ireland. But if that had been their motive, and if it had been on that account that they departed from the old course of policy, of course they would have gone further, and they would have done that which we are now endeavouring to do—they, too, would have endeavoured by satisfying the demands of Irishmen to enlist them on the side of order and of the good government of Ireland, and on the side of concord and amity between the peoples of the two Islands. But they did nothing of the kind. They allowed things to drift until at last our rule in Ireland, which had been disliked, came to be despised as well as disliked, and the government of the country got altogether out of hand. There is another respect in which the action of the late Government last summer has had an influence upon this matter. Not only did they disturb, without resettling, the ordinary course of government, but by their conduct they really made it well-nigh impossible, even if it were desirable, at any time to re-enter upon a course of coercion. It has been urged in reply to such a statement—and I was astonished to hear the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) use the argument in the previous debate—that this must be sheer nonsense, because in 1880 a Liberal Government allowed a Coercion Act to lapse, and since then we have had two Coercion Bills passed into law. A good deal might be said as to the circumstances of each case and the nature of the individual Acts; but I need not enter upon the merits of the cases, because this argument implies a total inability or failure to appreciate the real significance of what occurred. The real significance of what occurred rested, not upon the nature of the Acts which were allowed to lapse, but upon the persons and the Party who allowed them to lapse. We, the Liberals, are often accused of not acting consistently with our principles, and sometimes even we are told we are not sincere in our professions. At least, there is no doubt what those principles and those professions are. Their very basis is this, that we recognize to the fullest degree individual rights, the rights of free discussion and of a free Press, and every time we are parties to the bringing in of a Coercion Bill we appreciate the fact, however much we may justify ourselves, that we are infringing our political principles; and it is naturally to be expected that when opportunity offers we should seize it to return to our natural course and to abandon that which is most exceptional. But in this case it was not the Party on this side of the House; it was the Party of order, the Party most opposed to licence, the Party of property, the landlords' Party, the Party of the so-called Loyalists in Ireland—I do not admit their exclusive right to any one of these designations, I merely use them because they assume them to themselves—it was they who, without hesitation, who, without time for inquiry, on the eve of a General Election, ostentatiously abandoned and effusively denounced certain measures of coercion which had been enacted and maintained for the purpose of securing the very interests they professed to regard as most sacred. This is what constituted the significance of what occurred. I venture to say that after these circumstances it will be very difficult to persuade Members on this side of the House to listen again to the protests that come to them of the necessity for coercive legislation. I said that there was a second event in the course of last year which materially affected this whole matter—I refer to the issue of the General Election. It had the effect of clinching and completing and ratifying, by the seal of the national judgment, the evidence which had been furnished during many months, in a more scattered and less direct way, of a growing spirit of hostility to our rule in Ireland. For many months before that time all those sources to which we look for information as to popular feeling—elective bodies, great and small, representative of popular feeling—had been becoming in an increased degree national in sentiment, and determinedly in favour of intrusting government in Irish matters exclusively to Irishmen in Ireland. I can find nothing in our political principles on this side of the House, or even on that side of the House, where hon. Members are often liberal without knowing it in these matters, to justify our disregard of such an expression of opinion as this. I know it is said that the result of the General Election was largely due to intimidation. Well, no doubt there was intimidation in some cases; but surely the argument falls to the ground when we find that the results in parts of the country where there is no question of intimidation—in large cities and in counties—correspond almost exactly with those which were obtained in the districts in which it is said intimidation was used. Now, Sir, I have said that there is and has been this popular feeling in Ireland extending gradually and steadily against our rule; and it is this spirit which constitutes the difficulty of government in Ireland. Let not the House think that it has anything whatever to do with crime and disorder. Crime and disorder you can deal with, not so easily now as a few months ago. Conceivably, you can deal with it by strengthening the law; but no strengthening of legal powers, no exercise of law, whether exceptional or ordinary, can operate in check of a growing national feeling such as this. If you try to check it you will probably do nothing but exasperate it and make it stronger. And when, in addition to all this, on looking closely into what the object of this national sentiment is, we find that there is nothing in it mischievous or unreasonable, and that the object it has in view—which is the self-government of Ireland—is one which is in conformity with equity, reason, and common sense, I say we are called upon to go a step further, and, when we find our difficulty arising from this source, we ought to try whether by yielding to the wishes of the Irish people we may not take the shortest way to bring quiet and good government to that country. When, after the events to which I have referred, we had to undertake the duty of governing Ireland there were, practically, two courses we might have followed. We might, on the one hand, have adopted the latest policy of our Predecessors and suppressed the National League. Well, on that I have one homely observation to make, and it is this—that the suppression of the National League is easier said than done. I have my doubts whether the late Government had any definite idea of how they would carry out this policy of suppression. It is not of much consequence, because they knew very well that they would never be called upon to do it. At the time the announcement was made the shears of destiny in the hands of Mr. Jesse Collings were ready, and they knew that those shears in a day or two would slit their thin-spun political life. But has the House considered what is meant by the undertaking to suppress the National League? It means that you are to go a step far in advance of anything you have recently done in the way of penal legislatien. Under the late Liberal Government two Coercion Bills, so called, were passed into law. The first was directed against the perpetrators of outrages; we were told that if a few evilly-disposed persons in certain localities were imprisoned, outrages would cease. The second was aimed against secret societies which fomented and planned crime, and it gave facilities for the detection and punishment of criminals. I need not inquire whether either of those laws succeeded in the object for which they were designed; all I wish to point out is that both were intended to deal with crime and with crime alone. But when you undertake to suppress the National League you leave crime and you attack political opinion. I am no friend, or admirer, or apologist of the National League. No one more than I has condemned what has been said and done in its name, and by its members. But whatever may be its faults, and even supposing it is associated with that great system of intimidation which at times has reached such fearful development—even granting all that, it is in its essence a political association. And if you undertake to enter on this course you must first of all break up this great political association, and then the smaller political societies which, no doubt, will succeed it. You must suppress political newspapers; and I know nothing so likely to be done or so necessary to be done if this course is followed. You must stifle as far as you can political discussion; and when this is the result of the course you are invited to enter upon, I ask the House, not whether it is a good, a safe, or a sound policy, but whether it is a practicable policy? Let me add that if we once undertake it, of this at least I am certain—and I can quote my Irish experience here—that it will not do for us to look forward to two or three years as the limit of it. It will be of no use even for its own miserable purpose unless you sustain it without break or wavering or hesitation over a long period of years. I do not say whether that is a good thing to do. I simply ask whether it is a practicable thing to do; and if it was ever practicable before is it practicable now, with a new House of Commons which is more thoroughly imbued, because more directly inspired, by the democratic element? As I dismiss this policy as impracticable, I naturally turn to the alternative, and that is that we must give to the Irish people, in one form or another, the self-government they desire. I admit that in view of the immense responsibilities of such a change of attitude and the dangers and difficulties that attend it—I admit that there is great room for hesitation and even for vacillation of opinion. I am not ashamed to confess that my opinion on the subject has fluctuated. I would go further, and say that I have nothing but surprise, verging on pity, for any man tolerably well informed of the difficulties of Irish Government who was ready comfortably to settle himself down at once to a conclusion on this matter without having gone through many changes and modifications of opinion according as one side of this question or another presented itself most forcibly to his view. For myself, I clung long to the idea that even if a domestic Government on a large scale for Ireland must ultimately be given—and I have long been of that opinion—for the present, at least, we should content ourselves with laying a solid substructure in the shape of a thoroughly comprehensive system of local representative government. But this and all the intermediate ideas of District and Provincial Councils have been swept away. We cannot wait for them. They fail to satisfy and meet the first requirement of the case, which is that whatever you do you must satisfy the national sentiment of Ireland. Nothing short of a Central Council of some sort can satisfy that national sentiment; and until you have satisfied it, the creation of any smaller Boards, such as I spoke of, would only furnish new scenes and new instruments for further Nationalist effort and agitation. Besides, I wish to point out this—because some people are enamoured of these ideas—that such smaller Bodies would actually involve greater danger to the rights of minorities than a larger Body in Dublin. I will take at once the most ticklish question of all—the religious question. Fears have been expressed, with which I have no sympathy, that under the operation of this Bill, if it becomes law, the Protestant minority will be at the mercy of the Roman Catholic majority, which, of course, means that the Roman Catholic majority are going to oppress the Protestant minority. I do not believe it. I refuse to believe that Ireland is to be the one exception to all the free nations of Europe in which minorities of one religion enjoy perfect toleration and undisturbed freedom of action side by side with rival majorities. There is no instance that I know of comparable with that which is conjured up in Ireland, where we are expected to believe that alone in the whole of Europe two great sections of the Christian Church will be unable to deal on equal terms with the administration of their common affairs. I need not answer those fears; but if I admit, for the sake of argument, that the fears are well grounded, there is one question above all others to which they apply, and that is the question of education. Yet the first subject which by common consent is included in every scheme I have seen for Provincial, District, or similar Administrative Bodies is that of education, which is absolutely handed over to their disposal. Now, I would ask the House, supposing there is this danger to the religious minority, whether the Protestant minority, say, in the Province of Munster, would be safer as regards its rights in connection with education if they were handed over bodily to a Munster Council than they would be if they were dealt with by a great statutory Parliament sitting in Dublin representing all the parts and all the interests of Ireland in due proportion, acting under the eye of the world, acting also under a sense of direct responsibility, and, I will add, of the dignity attached to a great national Body? Then the question arises as to a Central Body, is it to be purely administrative or must it be legislative as well? In my opinion, undoubtedly, it must be both, and I will adduce only two reasons which might be urged in support of that contention. If the functions were administrative only, I fail to see how that could be a practical solution of the difficulty, because let us consider for a moment what the ordinary course of our affairs is. This Parliament enacts a law affecting some local question—the question of local government, for instance. But when we have passed a law conferring certain powers on Local Authorities, we do not turn our back on the whole subject and show no interest in it. We set up a Government Department to see that the Local Authorities do their duty, and that the intentions of Parliament are properly carried out, and also to keep us informed with regard to any changes that may be required. That Government Department has a Representative in this House, so that it is directly responsible to the very Body that legislates on the subject with which it deals. Now, it is supposed that we are still to legislate on Irish subjects, that the Castle and all the Offices are to be swept away, that the administration of the Acts of Parliament which we have passed here is to be intrusted to an elective Representative Body on the other side, over which we should have no control whatever, which would have no Representative here—necessarily no official Representative—and, in fact, the whole matter would pass entirely out of our hands. Thus in an administrative point of view, the proposal seems to stand condemned. Then I turn to the other point of view. What would be the position of the Executive? The Executive in Ireland would be appointed as other Ministers are from this Parliament; it would have no relations with, it would not be responsible in any way to, the Administrative Body in Dublin. You would have this great Administrative Body in Dublin claiming, and most justly, to speak in the name of the Irish people, and, side by side with it, you would have the shivering Executive responsible for law and order and the administration of justice, and all the thorny, critical subjects that would be likely to arise. You would, in fact, have two Authorities, the one the Executive that would be distrusted by the Irish people, the other which would attract the confidence of the Irish people, and you would invite the first to govern the country in presence of the second. Then the Irish Secretary would have to come here and meet the Irish Members. In the days when I held the post now filled by my right hon. Friend (Mr. John Morley) and had to answer the questions raised by any Irish Member in this House, the task was difficult enough; but, at all events, an Irish Member could speak only in the name of his constituents; but henceforward they would come to speak in the name of this great National Council, which might have passed a Resolution on that very subject. I do not hesitate to say that such a state of things would be impossible, that the position would be intolerable; and therefore I come to the conclusion that, both in the interests of administration and of the responsibility of the Legislative Body, and also from the point of view of the Executive, the Assembly in Dublin must have legislative as well as administrative powers, that it must appoint the Executive in Ireland, and that the Executive in Ireland must be responsible to it. That is the way — the plain and unvarnished way — in which I build up my scaffolding, on which the proposal contained in this Bill rests. I cannot myself see any escape from the arguments which I have addressed to the House. [*Laughter from the Opposition.*] Of course, hon. Members opposite do not agree in that; but knowing something, after all, of the subject, I cannot see how you can escape from the irresistible and irrefragable line of argument that leads you to the establishment of a statutory Parliament with all these powers in Dublin. Hitherto my observations, whatever may have been their shortcomings, have had at least one merit—that I have made a genuine second reading speech, and therefore I have not committed the error that I have attributed to others; but I am now obliged to notice one point which is regarded by many persons as of the utmost importance—I mean the question of the retention or non-retention of the Irish Members in this House. Let me, however, in order to be quite clear, say again that what I have enunciated is the cardinal principle of the Bill—namely, the policy of establishing a Legislative Body in Ireland which shall have legislative as well as administrative functions, and on which the Irish Executive shall rest. That, I think, is a pretty accurate definition of the cardinal principle of the Bill, and any arrangement that may be made as to Irish representation here must be consistent with that principle. Now, my belief is that the main proposal of the Bill has the cordial support of the great majority of the House. It has now come, not to be a mere vague idea of something in the nature of Home Rule or self-government, but I think that the definite proposal which I have described has attracted to itself the support of the great majority of the Members of this House. ["No!" *from the Opposition.*] Well, on this side of the House. There may be one quarter of the House in which it does not. Well, if that be so, I would ask the House—and I would especially ask those behind me—this question. Can anything be conceived so deplorable, reaching almost to the dimensions of a public calamity, as a failure to give legislative effect to the principle, seeing that we have come to that state of agreement upon it, simply because we cannot in some way or other arrange this question of Irish representation? Let such an expression as I have used in regard to its being a public calamity be taken as the measure of the desire of the Government to meet, in the most friendly spirit, the views on that point of all the most earnest friends of this general principle. The provision in the Bill as it stands is that Irish Members should cease to come here, except in the case of a proposal, and then only in the case of a contested proposal, to alter the Statute creating the Irish Legislature, and then for the purpose of discussion on that proposal they would be reinstated in this House. Now, speaking on Monday in the House, my right hon. Friend laid down this as the first condition to be observed in this matter—that the Parliamentary traditions of this House should not be broken up or confusion introduced into its working. I must say at once that, as far as I can see, this condition is hardly reconcilable with one of the proposals sometimes made, that all Irish Members should obtain full representation, both in point of numbers and in other respects. If my observations on this matter should be somewhat obvious and elementary, as I am afraid they may be, let me offer as my excuse that it often happens that anything that is very obvious is lost sight of altogether. I put aside at present the question of the numbers in which the Irish Members should come, because I conceive there would be a great difficulty in the way of any diminution of the number. If Ireland had a claim to be heard on any subject she would have a claim to be heard with a full voice; and it seems, to say the least, to be an odd arrangement to say that because half the subjects brought before the House do not concern them they are only to have half their proper weight upon those which do concern them. Even if the numbers were reduced, the difficulty which I am going to state would arise. Let it be remembered, also, that the House of Commons is not a mere place for making speeches, or carrying on discussions, or passing laws. This is a House on the support of a majority of which depends the Government of this country. That man in this country is Prime Minister who is supported by the majority of votes in the House of Commons. Be it good or bad, that is our system of government. It is different in some other countries. There are countries in which the Head of the Executive is appointed for a term of years, choosing his own Colleagues, and being during his term of Office independent of the Representative House. But here the Minister of the day lives and moves and has his being by the support of the House of Commons. Now, if the Irish Members, having their own domestic affairs settled at home, are to come to this House, obviously they must vote on all subjects or only on Imperial subjects. I will first take the supposition that they vote on all subjects. Then they sit here for the exercise of their functions; a purely English question arises, which has, perhaps, disturbed this country from one end to the other, and the issue and settlement of that question rests upon the votes of Irish Members, who have the full disposal of similar questions for themselves at home; and not only will they settle that question, but also the question of making and unmaking a Government. On the other hand, if they are to vote on Imperial questions only, and not on domestic questions, we have an almost greater difficulty, because when they are here, on one subject, the Ministry might have a majority or a minority; and when they are absent, on other subjects, his majority might become a minority, or his minority a majority. And I should like to know which majority is to determine the fate of Ministers? These are elementary statements of fact; but the more we bear them in mind the more apparent it will be that my right hon. Friend's first condition, that we ought not to introduce confusion into our Parliamentary system and Business, is difficult to be reconciled with the idea of the constant presence of Irish Members on all questions, and even on all Imperial questions. Well, I can only repeat what my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said in opening this debate. We are ready to consider, with the most friendly mind, all suggestions which may be made for Irish Members taking part in the proceedings of this House. My right hon. Friend mentioned on that occasion one or two suggestions which we could not accept, partly because we could not adopt any proposal as to which we do not see our way to a practicable plan, and partly also because they did not seem to meet the scruples of friendly objectors. Since then, however, other suggestions have been made; and if, before the Committee stage, they, or any of them, assume such a form that they can be definitely judged, we shall consider them not only with an open mind—[*Ironical Opposition cheers and counter cheers*]—I can quite imagine that that characteristic which I ascribe to ourselves meets no favour from hon. Gentlemen opposite. An open mind is the last thing we should expect to find among them; but we have an open mind upon these subjects, and, further, not only an open mind, but a mind anxious to find means for reconciling the main object of the Bill with the views which some of our Friends have expressed. There is, however, one subject in respect to which we have made a definite promise of an Amendment which we will ourselves introduce. The provisions of the Bill as they at present stand are reasonably open, we admit, to the objection that they involve an infringement of the sound principle that the power of taxation on the one hand should be associated with the right of representation on the other. In mitigation of this objection I might, indeed, urge that the contribution from Ireland to the British Exchequer under this Bill would have a fixed and stereotyped limit, and that to this limit we shall by hypothesis receive the assent of the Irish Members in this House before the Bill passes, and also that any additional taxation that might be imposed or raised in Ireland would ultimately go, not into the British, but into the Irish Exchequer. I say that in modification of the general principle that taxation and representation should go together; but I admit that the criticism is valid in principle, and we promise to amend the Bill in this respect. To do this is made the more easy by the fact that this question stands on a footing somewhat different from that of any other Parliamentary question, in this respect—that it is only on the Motion of a Minister of the Crown that a new tax is created or an old tax increased. It is true that a private Member can move to repeal or reduce a tax; but such Motions are extremely rare, and my impression is that their success is still rarer, and if such a Motion of a private Member succeeds, or is even likely to succeed, it is then taken up by the Government. We shall propose, therefore, as my right hon. Friend stated the other night, that before any Motion is made to create or increase a tax the Irish Members shall be summoned and restored to their full position in this House. This is the proposal by which we are ready to remove the particular disqualification which the Bill has been shown to throw upon Ireland in regard to representation. This was a definite and tangible blot, for which a practical remedy is proposed; and in regard to other blots, where any practical plan is shown to us, we shall consider them with an earnest disposition by any means in our power to remove or mitigate any objections of detail which may be pointed out. I will not detain the House longer. I will only say that this Bill covers ground so fresh, and embodies ideas so new, and is fraught with such vast possibilities for good or evil to the Kingdom, that no one can approach its consideration with a light heart. It has, not unnaturally, aroused the deepest apprehensions, on the one hand, of those who dread that the new powers granted to the Irish people may be employed as an instrument of injury to the British Empire; and, on the other hand, of those who anticipate the further embitterment of sectional and sectarian strife. We have done our best. We have embodied in the Bill such guarantees as were possible against both of these dangers. But far better, more forcible, and far more efficacious than any written or statutory guarantees will be the growth of a better feeling both in Ireland itself and between the peoples of the two Islands. I am a firm believer in the sobering effect of direct responsibility, and I am an equally firm believer in the healing effect of joint co-operation in public life between men of all creeds and classes. I advocate the adoption of the policy contained in this Bill, not only because I believe that it will facilitate the good government of Ireland, but because I believe it to be in the end the surest and shortest way of promoting concord within her shores, and restoring friendship and good feeling between the three parts of the United Kingdom.

Mr. EDWARD CLARKE (Plymouth) said, the House had listened with expectant interest to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. No one could expect from him that he should make a formal answer to the elaborate argument of the right hon. and learned Member for Bury (Sir Henry James). That argument dealt with questions of Constitutional Law, which undoubtedly required very careful examination and consideration. The speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War had been looked forward to because of the peculiar character of the interests which at present centred in this Bill. The Government knew perfectly well that even of their own Party they had scarcely a bare majority that would pledge itself to support the enactment of this Bill as it was laid before Parliament; and they knew perfectly well that outside of Parliament the educated and the intelligent opinion of the country, as the Prime Minister himself had confessed, had pronounced a definite judgment against the Bill; and so definite and distinct was this judgment that the right hon. Gentleman had made a sort of appeal to all those who were not included in the classes of the Professions, of wealth, of influence, and of education—to those masses who could be more easily moved by passion and prejudice, because they had less knowledge of the past and less power of judging as to the probabilities of the future, and who, as they were more easily moved by prejudice and by passion, were so much the more easily manipulated by the machinists of a particular Party. The real interest in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman to which they had just listened was due to the fact that it was expected that some sop might be offered to the defaulters of the Liberal Party, that some expedient might be found by which the support of all sections of the Party might be brought together in aid of the Ministry; and, undoubtedly, rumours had been put forth that the right hon. Gentleman was going to make a statement that would reconcile the Prime Minister with some of his defaulting followers. But what did that speech amount to? It came to this ingenuous confession of an "open mind." The mind was indeed so open that it had nothing in it at all. It had no constructive capacity, it received no help or instruction from anyone else, and was unable to contribute any single suggestion to the improvement of this Bill. The only thing that the House was told was that the Government had come to a definite conclusion that whenever it was proposed to impose a new or increased tax upon Ireland the Irish Representatives should be invited to attend Parliament in order to resist it. What would be their commission when they came from Ireland on such occasions? They would, of course, resist such a tax, and their resistance would necessitate its abandonment, and confusion would become worse confounded. One listened with interest to the delivery of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman to notice whether there was any reproduction of those suggestions made by the Prime Minister on Monday about the Joint Commission, and he supposed they had finally disappeared, because the right hon. Gentleman had said that the Government was not prepared to adopt any proposal which it was not in a condition itself to put into a definite shape. He had put into shape one proposal; but with regard to the others, he said that if anyone would be good enough to put them into definite shape for the Government before the time of the Committee stage then the open mind would be perfectly ready to consider them. Well, perhaps those suggestion about the Joint Commission had become matters of historic curiosity. Certainly they were very curious. To establish a Joint Commission which was to decide whether Irishmen were to be invited to the House to take part in certain debates was surely one of the oddest suggestions that ever occurred to a Minister. Who was to nominate the Commission? He presumed the Prime Minister would have considerable voice in the selection of the Representatives. The result would be that if the Ministry found itself in difficulties and in want of 103 votes, the Commission would be called together to invite the Irish Members over to its assistance, and the Commission would become a piece of machinery by which a falling Minister might attempt to save himself. It had been said in the course of the debate that those who opposed this Bill indulged too much in discussing its details instead of its main principle, and the right hon. Gentleman had stated that the main principle was that a Legislative Body should be established in Ireland upon which the Irish Executive should rest. The country had examined and considered and had decisively rejected that principle. The principle of this measure was to be found in its 1st clause, which was to the effect that on and after an appointed day the Legislature of Ireland should consist of Her Majesty the Queen and an Irish Legislative Body. That was the proposal of the Bill, and he hoped and believed that it would be rejected by a decisive majority in that House. They had heard from the right hon. Gentleman some observations in support of the principle. He began by a very curious confession—namely, that this Bill had been introduced because the Government had not felt themselves strong enough to defeat the National League; and because the Government of the Queen could not put down the National League, or hesitated to put down the crime that had followed the action of that Body, they, therefore, calmly proposed to surrender the Government of the Queen in Ireland in favour of the National League. The National League must be accepted as having put down the Government of the Queen, and must be installed in Dublin under the title of the Legislative Council, the composition of which they could already foresee. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the Bill had been introduced with the object of satisfying the national sentiment of Ireland. There was this to be said upon that point—that nothing that was consistent with the interests, with the honour, and with the sentiment of England, would satisfy the national sentiment of Ireland. But surely to talk of satisfying a national sentiment as an imperative rule for legislation, was to mistake the object and the purposes of legislation altogether. They had to deal with the good government of Ireland and the security and good government of all portions of that people, and all sections of that community. It might be, and he thought it was, a fact that the indulgence and satisfaction of that national sentiment would lead, not to good government, but bad government of the most important parts of that country, and if they found that the national sentiment could not be satisfied by that Bill, and that the enacting of the measure would lead almost of necessity to disorder and disunion instead of good government, surely the plea of national sentiment was the least substantial claim the measure could have upon the House. The right hon. Gentleman asked the House to assent to a great experiment which was put forward in this form for the first time. The right hon. Gentleman had said that Ireland had had a Parliament before Grattan's time; but before 1782 Ireland never had a Parliament worthy of the name, the Assembly being a mere creature of the Executive Government of this country, it having no power to originate Bills, while the measures it did pass had to be sent over here for the English Attorney General to determine whether or not they should be allowed to become law. There had, however, been a Parliament in Ireland after 1782, and had the right hon. Gentleman desired to satisfy the national sentiment of Ireland, he would have attempted to restore to her something like that Parliament. But the Parliament, as defined and limited by the Bill before the House, was altogether unlike the Parliament of Grattan, and he would show the House in a few minutes, by statements of Mr. Grattan himself, that that was so. Even the Parliament of Grattan had proved a dismal and disastrous failure. It was a surrender to Ireland, as Grattan himself boasted. It had been conceded to Ireland because at that time the armed Volunteers of Ireland were so numerous that the Home Government was afraid to face them. But that very Parliament, so conceded, checked very materially the prosperity of Ireland. [*Cries of* "No!"] Hon. Members below the Gangway might cry "No!" but they could not alter the history of their country as it was recorded by facts and figures. During the existence of that Parliament not only was the material prosperity of Ireland checked, but the relations between the two countries became of so anxious, so delicate, and so dangerous a character that it was with the concurrence of all the statesmen of this country that the union of the two countries was resolved upon. It had been said over and over again in that House that the abolition of that Parliament had been brought about by deplorable and by shameful means. But there were two sides to the question. Sir George Cornewall Lewis had pointed out that what was done in the way of buying seats in the Irish Parliament made that Parliament more, and not less, the popular Assembly. The seats that were bought by money voted in open Parliament for the purpose were the seats of the borough-mongers of Ireland, and the purchase of those seats made the Irish Parliament at the time it accepted the Union more—and not less—representative of the people than before the purchase was effected. In the next place, there was nothing underhand about the transaction; but the bargain was made in Parliament in the open day, and there was this absolute justification—so plain that if the operation had to take place over again it would be the duty of the right hon. Gentleman and his Colleagues to do it in the way it was done by Lord Cornwallis—that there was only one alternative which would have been more terrible, and that was the reconquest of Ireland by force. Since the abolition of Grattan's Parliament and the union of the two countries Ireland had prospered. During late years she had gone on prospering, and he wished to know what was the object for which this new Parliament was to granted to her? There was no legislation that the National Party could show would be for the benefit of Ireland that would not be eagerly carried out in that House. What was it that it was suggested that a National Parliament would do for Ireland that the Imperial Parliament would refuse to do? Was there one Member of that Body which called itself the representative body of the Nationalist Party, who would get up and state what was desirable for the advantage of the people of Ireland, and which he had no hope of getting from that Parliament? They knew perfectly well they could not mention one such legislative proposal in that House. They knew perfectly well that if any one spokesman from among them were to get up and state to the House some definite proposal to which legislative form could be given, and which he could show would be beneficial to the people of Ireland, there would not only be willingness, but eager competition amongst all English Parties in that House to have an opportunity of testifying to its goodwill towards Ireland. Let the Irish Party state for what purpose they desired a Parliament in Dublin, and what it was they wanted to create that Parliament for, and he ventured to say that if their demand had anything of sound and abiding principle in it, dictated by justice—and whether in the English Parliament or in the Irish Parliament those were the limitations within which useful legislation must travel—let them only mention a measure having these characteristics, and there would be a cordial acceptance of that measure and a desire to give it prompt effect. The Legislature shadowed in the Government Bill was not the Parliament which had been asked for and demanded by the Irish people or the Irish Leaders, and it differed from Grattan's Parliament in some very important particulars. Mr. Grattan, speaking in the Parliament which his genius had done so much to win for his countrymen, said—

> "What is your claim of right? That you are the only Body competent to make law for this Realm in any case whatsoever."

That was Grattan's claim. How did it compare with the miserable stinted sort of Parliament created by the Bill and limited in its functions, and from whose operations and whose judgment the most important matters of legislative activity were entirely excluded; a Parliament which was to be kept in check at every turn by the English Privy Council, if it presumed to travel beyond the limits of the Statute. Here, again, he would quote Grattan's words—

> "Thus have you sealed the treaty with Great Britain. On the one side the restoration of the final Judicature, the extinction of the legislative claim of her Privy Council, of her Perpetual Mutiny Bill, the repeal of the Act of Legislative Supremacy; on your side satisfaction; and thus are the two nations compacted for ever in freedom and peace."

There was not one of these items, of which Mr. Grattan spoke, which was given to the Irish people by the Bills. Take the restoration of the final Judicature. There was a special clause which provided that nothing was to interfere with the ultimate jurisdiction of the House of Lords. Then, there was the extinction of the legislative claim of the Privy Council. The Bill expressly provided that the Irish Parliament was to be subject to the check of the Privy Council. It was true, they might get rid of their Judges; but these Judges on being turned away from their offices were to receive full compensation, and were able to become members of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, whose duty it was to decide whether Irish measures were within the scope of the legislative powers of the Irish Parliament. Further, the Perpetual Mutiny Bill would not be abolished; but the Army and Navy would be entirely independent of the Irish Parliament. [*Home Rule cheers, and* "Hear, hear!" *from Mr. Gladstone.*] He was glad to hear so much cheerful satisfaction at the difference between

Grattan's Parliament and that which was now given by the Bill, and he did not wonder that the Prime Minister made vocal his delight at the way in which that satisfaction had been expressed. But if the question were put, whether this concession was likely to be a final measure or not, he did not think that there would be quite so much satisfaction shown. Were the Irish people going to accept anything much smaller than Grattan's Parliament? They had heard about passing an Act of Amnesty. By all means. But not an Act of Oblivion. Let them deal kindly, let them deal generously with those who might have spoken strongly, or those who had acted violently in past times; but if they were going to embark on a great political experiment, it was absolutely essential they should see what they had said, at whose request they were going to make it, and how far they were likely to be satisfied. He wished to call attention first to what had fallen from the Leader of the Irish Party. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) had spoken several times upon the question of the limits of the concessions which he was willing to make to the English people. Speaking at Mayo, on the 3rd of November last year, he had said—

> "Speaking for myself, and I believe for the people of Ireland and all my Colleagues, I have to declare that we will never accept, either expressly or impliedly, anything but the full and complete right to arrange our own affairs, and to make our land a nation, and to secure for Ireland, free from outside control, the right to direct her own course among the peoples of the earth."

He would read a few words more. Speaking at Cork, on the 21st of January, 1885, the hon. Member for Cork had said—

> "We cannot ask for less than the restitution of Grattan's Parliament, with its important privileges and far-reaching constitution."

He had just shown that every one of the points which had been the principal ones given to the Irish House of Commons in the Charter of that Parliament by the Act of 1782 this Bill denied to the Irish people. Speaking at Clonmel, on the 9th of January, 1885, the hon. Member for Cork had said—

> "We claim for Ireland, and for the masses of the people of Ireland, the restitution of her Parliament—her independent Parliament—of which she was cheated and deprived towards the close of last century."

He would add the words of one of the youngest Members of the Nationalist Party, the hon. Member for Newry (Mr. Justin Huntly M'Carthy), who had said—

> "We will have no contemptible National Council, no small Local Boards, such as Mr. Chamberlain suggested, to govern us, we will have Grattan's complete Parliament, and we will have more than Grattan's Parliament; we will be as free as a State in the great American Union is free, free to make our own laws for our own people in our own way."

[*Home Rule cheers.*] Those expressions were received with cheers from below the Gangway, and the Representatives of the Nationalist Party just reinforced by their Deputy Leader, and they accepted those as the statements of what they desired. Did they abide by those declarations now? If so, they flung to the winds the statement of the Prime Minister that this was to be a final measure. One of two things must be the case; either hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway were now contented to use mild and pacificatory language to conceal what would be dangerous to this Bill to avow, in order to get it passed, or else they had not meant all those fine things which they had told the people of Ireland as to the restitution of Grattan's Parliament. Now, he thought better of them than to suppose that they were going to run away from all these declarations; he would not hear their enemies say it, and he would not take their word for it. They had made these declarations and had meant them; but of this he was sure, that if they were to try to back out of these declarations there would be a power behind them which would make short work of them; either as Members of that Parliament or of any Irish Parliament. They would not be allowed to betray the hopes which they had raised, and falsify the promises they had made. There had been an interesting little incident at the beginning of Grattan's Parliament which it would not be useless to recall to the recollection of the House. The first thing that that Parliament had done was to vote £50,000 to Henry Grattan, and no doubt that proceeding remained on record as a great encouragement to pure-minded patriots. But, within three months of that Vote, Mr. Flood was denouncing Mr. Grattan in the Irish House of Commons as a mendicant patriot, who had sold his country for prompt payment. Hon. Members below the Gangway would be told now that they had betrayed the interests of the Irish people, and had accepted at the hands of the Prime Minister a measure which would not satisfy either their needs or their desires. The Irish people, in his judgment, would be worthy of contempt if they quietly accepted this Bill, and then asked for no more. To call this a Legislative Body, to have the opportunity of passing measures which could only come into force by the approval of the Crown—which approval would be given under the advice of the English Prime Minister—to have no authority over the great national forces of the Army and Navy ; to have no part in foreign affairs, or in Treaties of Commerce ; to find itself a simply limited Assembly in Dublin, with only the precious privilege of appointing a few ornamental personages, such as Secretaries and Under Secretaries, with no real power, who would furnish forth the appearance of a Legislative Assembly—the Irish people were far too high-spirited to sit content under such a state of things as that. They would make the claim to this country either to give them real independence or to let them come back to that House with all their privileges. That claim would be irresistible. It had been said that it was undesirable to put down the National League, because it was better to have to do with a public body acting in the light of day than to have to do with secret societies. He, for one, did not think so. A secret society was not nearly so formidable as one which in its career of intimidation added to the authority which it naturally gained from the unstinted publicity of its proceedings the fact that the Legislature did not interfere with what it did. He believed that the Police Authorities would know how to deal with a secret society ; but it was essential that the police should have authority to deal with such a question. If this Parliament were established it was clear that it would be only a starting-place for further agitation and further claim. It had been said that matters had been altered by the course pursued by the Conservative Government last year in allowing the Crimes Act to lapse. He thought that a much larger explanation had been given of the determination of the Conservative Government than that determination had really required or justified. The real fact was that at the time it had been an absolute impossibility for either a Liberal Government or a Conservative Government to renew that Act. That impossibility had been created by two Members of that House. One was the Prime Minister and the other the present Chief Secretary for Ireland. The Prime Minister had from time to time postponed the announcement of what parts of that Act he was proposing to re-enact. He had told them nothing except a few words about some of the most equitable clauses of the Act being renewed, and had refused to specify what he intended to renew. Then had come the evening when the right hon. Gentleman had told them that the Government were willing to renew some of the clauses of that Act, and an hour after that announcement the right hon. Gentleman now Chief Secretary for Ireland had risen below the Gangway and read out an Amendment which he had prepared in that interval to the effect that the then condition of Ireland did not call for any such measures. The resolute resistance to the proposal threatened by the present Chief Secretary for Ireland made it absolutely impossible for either a Liberal or a Conservative Government to re-enact the Crimes Act at that time. How far the consequences had been serious only those who had been intimately acquainted with the affairs of the Irish Government were able to judge. But those transactions pledged neither Party at the present time, and bound no Party to any policy in times such as they were now in. It was entirely open to the Conservative Party to deal with the state of things now existing in Ireland undeterred by any memories of what happened six months ago. It was stated over and over again by the right hon. Gentleman who spoke just before him that the proposal—the mere proposal—of this Bill had had very serious consequences. With the most candid accuracy he described it as having been the most startling event which had happened in the political memory of anybody in this House. This was a strong description ; but it was perfectly true that the Prime Minister had produced this Bill, which they knew from revelations that had been made was his own Bill.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): You know nothing of the kind.

MR. EDWARD CLARKE said, although under restrictions severely enforced, a former Minister had had an opportunity of telling the House what had occurred. He had stated that until March 13 the Cabinet had no idea what sort of proposal was going to be laid before them, and this ex-Minister declared that he understood, when he joined the Cabinet, that the inquiry which was to take place into Irish affairs was to be conducted by the Cabinet; and it was a disappointment to him to find that the inquiry was not to be conducted by the Cabinet, but by the right hon. Gentleman himself only. He further said that, so far as he knew, the assistance of the Cabinet was not asked until the matter was laid before them on March 13. That struck the right hon. Gentleman with surprise, and he immediately tendered his resignation. He (Mr. E. Clarke) quite agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War that the mere proposal of this Bill had been a great event; but the rejection of the Bill would be a most useful event, and one which would not easily be forgotten. Where the Prime Minister had failed, no Leader of the Liberal Party in the future was likely to be in a hurry to make a similar proposal. They knew perfectly well that from the Tory Party no such proposal would come. [An hon. MEMBER: We do not know it.] He did not believe there was one man now sitting on the Front Opposition Bench who would ever commit himself to such a proposal; and if he did so, he would shatter the Party in exactly the same way as the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister had cloven and shattered the Liberal Party. They had the great satisfaction of knowing that, this Bill once defeated on a second reading, it was not in the least likely that for many years to come another leader of public opinion in this country would embark on the dangerous enterprize of trying to conciliate—he would almost add to dupe—the Representatives of the Irish Nationalist Party in this House. But if Parliament asserted itself and distinctly refused to embark on such a course as this, if it would devote itself to other tasks which, though they might be slow and though they might be painful, and though they might involve, as the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington) said, the rise and fall of several Ministers and the weakening of Party ties—which he believed had done much in their operation in Parliamentary life to preserve and purify public life, and provide men capable of serving Her Majesty in various Departments of the State—then Parliament would have the satisfaction of knowing that it was on the right course, and that it was doing the thing which was right. They had no right to shatter the Empire. They had no right to call upon the people of Ulster to submit to an authority which was not a part of our Constitution as they knew it and prized it; but it was their right and bounden duty, however painful that duty might be, by all the means that occurred to them, by all means that might be devised by the experience and wisdom of statesmen, to go forward with patient faith in the resolute determination that Parliament should sacrifice its ease and convenience in order to fulfil its duties of good government for the whole of the United Kingdom. If this course was consistently pursued, they could not fail of ultimate success.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Wexford, N.) said, he thought the House would not have failed to note the difference between the arguments advanced by the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just sat down (Mr. E. Clarke) and those which were urged by the right hon. and learned Member for Bury (Sir Henry James). The right hon. and learned Member for Bury argued that the Bill was so far-reaching that it would be dangerous to pass it, and his argument was based on profound distrust of the Irish people. The hon. and learned Member for Plymouth, on the contrary, contended that the Bill provided so flimsy and worthless a scheme that if the Irish people had any self-respect they would not accept it. Perhaps the Irish people might be allowed to judge for themselves, and to speak for themseves, in this matter. He trusted the House would accept with readiness the statement of the Representatives of the Irish people that, on the whole, they were satisfied with this Bill, and that, so far as their judgment went, it provided a final settlement of the question. No one could have failed to note the bent given to the discussion now and on the first reading by the enemies of this Bill. They had exhaustively criticized its details, but had said nothing about its vital principle. He should prefer to take a course more suitable to the present stage and to argue on the general principle of the measure. What was its essential principle? No dissent was expressed when the right hon. Gentleman who had spoken from the Government Bench (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) described that principle as the establishment of a Parliament in Ireland with certain well-defined powers for the legislative and administrative control of Irish affairs. Arguing the subject from the standpoint of an Irishman and a Nationalist, the first thing he asked the House to consider was whether that principle was one which Ireland had a right to have conceded to her. He was aware this argument of right might not appeal with much force to some classes of English Members; but it would appeal with force to the English masses, who were a justice-loving people, and also, he hoped, to their Representatives in this House. Grattan, who, in addition to being an ardent Irish Nationalist, was also a devoted adherent of the Imperial greatness of England, had argued thus upon this topic of right—

> "Before Ireland goes into her title, let us hear the title of England, for it is not a question whether Ireland has a right to be free, but whether Great Britain has a right to enslave her. When the latter country asks what right have the Irish to make laws for themselves, Ireland will not answer, but demands what right has England to make laws for Ireland. From nature she has none. Nature has not given one nation a right over another. She has not that right from covenant. Let her show the covenant; in what history is it recorded?"

Those who now argued against this Bill pointed to the Act of Union as a covenant. The answer of the Irish Representatives to that argument was to point to the character of the Act of Union, and, above all, to the means by which it was passed. If the Act of Union was to be held to be a bar to Ireland's right to self-government, then those who so held must regard that Act as a Treaty freely accepted by both nations. Those were the grounds on which Mr. Pitt recommended the Act of Union in his great speech on January 31st, 1799. He said it would be a

> "Union by free consent on just and equal terms—the free and voluntary association of two great countries, which join for their common benefit in one Empire, where each will retain its proportional weight and importance under the security of equal laws and reciprocal affection."

And he quoted the lines—

> "Non ego nec Teucris Italos parere jubebo,
> Nec nova regna peto; paribus se legibus ambæ;
> Invictæ gentes æterna in fœdera mittant."

Was that a correct description of what the Act of Union had proved to be? "Equal laws!" Why, the whole history of Ireland since the Act of Union had been one of exceptional legislation. "Voluntary association of two great countries!" Every historian acknowledged there had not been free consent by the Irish people. The Union was carried in opposition to the will of almost the whole nation; as the Premier had said, the entire of the unbribed intellect of Ireland was against it. Mr. Grey (afterwards Lord Grey) spoke on the matter of Ireland's consent in this House, and he said—

> "There are in the Irish Parliament 300 Members; 120 of these strenuously opposed the Union; 162 Members voted in favour of the Union, and of these 116 were placemen."

William Cunningham Plunkett also spoke on this point, and his testimony was exactly the same; and while he did not desire to trouble the House by reading a number of quotations to enforce a point which he thought noboby could deny—not even the hon. and learned Gentleman who had last spoken—he would read, for the benefit of some of his new friends of the Loyal and Patriotic Union, a few words by Mr. Lecky. In Vol. 2 of his History, Mr. Lecky wrote—

> "The years between 1779 and 1798 were probably the most prosperous in Irish history, and the generation which followed the Union was one of the most miserable. The sacrifice of nationality was extorted by the most enormous corruption in the history of representative institutions. It was demanded by no considerable portion of the Irish people; it was accompanied by no signal political or material benefit that could mitigate or counteract its unpopularity; and it was effected without a dissolution in opposition to the immense majority of the Representatives of the counties and considerable towns, and to the innumerable addresses from every part of the country. Whatever may be thought of the abstract merits of the Act of Union as it was carried, it was a crime of the deepest turpitude, which, by imposing with every circumstance of infamy a new form of government on a reluctant and protesting

nation, has vitiated the whole course of Irish opinion."

On this question of right the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) appeared to be divided from the Irish Representatives by a wide gulf. Last autumn he made a speech which attracted much attention and gave no little offence in Ireland. He controverted Ireland's right to self-government by the extraordinary statement that 5,000,000 Irishmen in Ireland had no more right to govern themselves than 5,000,000 Englishmen in London. That was regarded in Ireland as a very feeble and a very insulting misrepresentation of her case. If he could have shown that London was a country distinct from England, with distinct historic traditions and distinct national characteristics; that London had possessed, as Ireland had, distinct Parliamentary institutions of her own for 600 years; that those Parliamentary institutions had been robbed from London by means such as he (Mr. J. Redmond) had described against the will of the people, and that an overwhelming majority of the people to-day demanded their restoration, then indeed he would have some title to institute a comparison between the cases of London and Ireland. But no such analogy existed. The fault at the bottom of the right hon. Gentleman's argument was that he pre-supposed a perfect identity between Ireland and England. Was there any such identity? There was not geographical identity—the countries were divided by 60 miles of water. There was not historical identity—no two nations in Europe had histories more dissimilar. There was not identity of character—it was actually part of the argument of their opponents that there were deep and ineradicable differences of character between the two peoples. There was not identity of condition—England was rich, Ireland was poor. England was a manufacturing country, Ireland was an agricultural one. What identity was there? The identity imparted by the Act of Union! The only argument in support of this idea of identity must depend upon that Act, and some Gentlemen went so far as to say that the Act of Union was a fundamental and unalterable law. Many hon. Members would remember Sydney Smith's remark, that "the man who talks about an unalterable law proves himself to be an unalterable fool." Lord Beaconsfield, at any rate, did not come within that sweeping statement, for in a speech made by him in the House in 1868, on the Irish Church Disestablishment Bill, he said—

> "I take no exaggerated view of even the Articles of Union. I have not for a moment pretended that the Articles of Union between the two nations are irreversible. I have not for a moment pretended that the Articles of Union and the great Acts of Parliament which were passed to carry them into effect cannot by the consent of the Soverign and of the Estates of the Realm be changed or modified."—(3 *Hansard*, [191] 898.)

Shortly after this speech the Act of Union was modified. All the Prime Minister now proposed, and all the Irish Representatives asked, was that the process of readjustment, which was commenced in 1869, should be carried to its logical conclusion, so that the Government of Ireland should be brought into sympathy with the will of the governed, and into harmony with the ideas and conditions of this period of the 19th century. So much on the argument of right. He came now to a lower, but, perhaps, a more potent argument—namely, that of expediency. Apart altogether from Ireland's inherent right, let him ask, was it not manifestly expedient that this concession should be made? What was the history of England's effort to rule Ireland from Westminster? No Englishman, who loved the fair fame of his country, could contemplate without shame the miserable record of 85 years of coercion, disaffection, and ever-increasing poverty. How stood the record? Eighty-five years of English legislation for Ireland had resulted in Acts that spoke volumes. In evidence of promised contentment, order, and peace, there had been 12 Acts for the suspension of *Habeas Corpus;* 19 Peace Preservation Acts, whether so-called or otherwise; 19 Acts for limiting and controlling the possession of arms and gunpowder; 17 for the prevention of resistance to the law by means of outrages against persons and property; 26 against unlawful and dangerous societies, combinations, and assemblies, and processions; 11 for the suppression of rebellions, insurrections, and disturbances; and two for curtailing the freedom of the Press—or a Coercion Act of some sort or other for every year since that in which the Act of Union was passed. In evidence of the anticipated prosperity, there had been 11 Acts for the direct relief, otherwise than by the ordinary Poor Law, of exceptionally extreme poverty, and consequent distress; 10 for the indirect relief of poverty by means of advancing money for public works; four for giving the extremely poor employment at the public expense; four for contending with famine fever; four for saving from perishing by starvation the thousands of children deserted through the abject poverty of their parents; three for the relief and assistance of Railway Companies otherwise unable to proceed with their works; four for the artificial assistance of banks, and for sustaining commercial credit; and four for the rescue of encumbered estates from hopeless insolvency—making in all 43 Acts in acknowledgment of the ruin and despair that had haunted all sorts and conditions of men. He had listened with surprise to the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman who spoke last (Mr. E. Clarke). He spoke of the Parliament of Grattan having checked the commercial development of Ireland. The hon. and learned Member was a high authority, no doubt, but he believed even he would himself admit that Lord Clare was quite as high an authority, and he was in direct conflict with him on this point. He would not pursue that further, but would quote a few figures to show how the development of Irish industries had been affected since the Union. He found that in Dublin, in the year 1800, there were 90 master woollen manufacturers, employing 4,918 hands; and in the year 1840 the industry was practically dead. There were in 1800, 30 master woolcombers in Dublin, employing 230 hands; while in 1834 the industry was practically dead. There were 13 carpet manufacturers in Dublin, in 1800, employing 230 hands; and in 1841 there were none. In the town of Kilkenny there were to be found in 1800 56 blanket manufacturers, employing 3,000 hands; and in the year 1822 the industry was dead. Then, again, he found that in Dublin, in the year 1800, there were 2,500 silk-loom weavers at work; and in 1840 the industry was gone. In the year 1799 there were 2,500 calico looms at work in Balbriggan; in 1841 there were but 228. In Wicklow, in 1800, there were 1,000 hand-looms at work; in 1841 there were none. In the City of Cork there were at work in the year 1800 the following industries, which had since declined:—1,000 braid weavers, of whom only 49 remained in 1834; 2,000 worsted weavers, of whom only 90 remained in 1834; 3,000 hosiers, of whom only 28 remained in 1834. There were also 700 wool-combers, 2,000 cotton weavers, and 600 linen check weavers, each of which industries was dead in 1834. They had, therefore, the fact that all these industries which had been in existence at the time of the Union had either totally disappeared or had been partially destroyed before the year 1841. Now, he would ask the House did they seriously believe that it had been to the advantage of England or of the Empire that all these industries in Ireland had died out, and that the entire population had been compelled to fall back upon agriculture as its only means of living? The answer was to be found in the agrarian troubles that had occupied so much of the time of Parliament, and baffled all the efforts of their ablest statesmen to cope with or remedy. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham had another argument, and it was this—that the Bill would lead to separation. He said that the Bill would change Ireland into a "foreign and hostile country," and the right hon. and learned Member for Bury (Sir Henry James) followed with the same argument. It would be well for them, however, to consider whether they could make this country more "foreign" and "hostile" than it admittedly was at present. But in almost the same breath in which he spoke of this Bill making Ireland a "foreign" country, he said it would put her in the position of Canada. Was Canada, then, a "foreign" country? The idea was almost preposterous. But why should not Ireland be put in the position of Canada? "Because," replied the right hon. Gentleman, "Canada is friendly to the Empire, and Ireland is not." But was Canada always friendly? The right hon. Member for West Birmingham had quoted from certain passages in the speeches of Mr. Butt on the subject. He (Mr. J. Redmond) would, however, quote another passage from a speech of Mr. Butt, in which, speaking of Canada, he said—

> "In 1839 Canada was with difficulty held by force of arms for the British Crown. Canada

was in open rebellion. Canada was at a distance from England—close to a great Republic, which was certainly not unwilling to incorporate the Canadian Provinces with their States. The experiment was tried of giving Canada Home Rule. It has not disintegrated the Empire."

But it was argued the cases were different because in Ireland there were two nations. Well, he might say, by way of parenthesis, that they (the Nationalists) detested the idea of there being two nations in Ireland. There had been too much bitterness between Irishmen, and they had always looked forward with hope and some confidence to the day when these bitter feelings would cease, and men of all creeds in Ireland would be able to join in a common effort for the elevation of their common country. But were there no two nations in Canada? On the contrary. Canada had two Provinces differing in race, in religion, in language, and in law. Lower Canada contained a great French population hostile to England, alienated from her by the memories of recent conquest, and Catholic in their religion. Upper Canada was chiefly peopled by English Protestant settlers—by Puritans from Scotland, and Irish Orangemen from the Bann. Home Rule was granted to Canada. The two Provinces were united under one Parliament. With all these elements of distraction, and disaffection, and danger, was the Empire disintegrated? Had Canada flung herself into the arms of the United States? Was Canada torn by domestic dissensions? Canada, instead of being, as it was in 1839, the most disaffected and rebellious Dependency of Britain, was now the most attached to English connection, the most loyal in its allegiance to the British Crown. Provinces that seemed arrayed against each other in hopeless antagonism and discord, were now united together. With the differences, and the passions, and the Party strifes that agitated all Constitutional Governments—the French Catholics of Lower Canada, and the English Puritans, and the Irish Orangemen of Upper Canada, met in one Parliament to serve the interests of that common country, attachment to which was no longer at variance with a true allegiance to the British Crown. The right hon. Gentleman said Canada was only held by a "voluntary tie." But did the right hon. Gentleman, who was regarded as a Leader of Democratic thought in this country, mean to say he preferred an Union based upon force, as the present Union with Ireland, to an Union which rested upon the will of the people? Edmund Burke said—"A voluntary tie is a more secure link of connection than subordination borne with grudging and discontent." So said they, and so also they believed would say the Democracy of England, even though some of its so-called Leaders refused to trust the people of Ireland. But the argument of the right hon. Gentleman might be met in another way. He utterly denied that this Bill would put Ireland in the position of Canada. No Colony paid any portion of the National Debt. Ireland, under this Bill, would pay a portion of the National Debt. No Colony paid any portion of Imperial taxation, while Ireland would do so. No Colony paid Custom duties imposed by the Imperial Parliament, Ireland would do so. The Colonies fixed their own electoral law, but the electoral law for Ireland was to be fixed by the Imperial Parliament. Then the Colonies could have an Army and Navy of their own, but Ireland would not have either an Army or Navy of her own. But they were told, because Irish Members were to be withdrawn from Westminster, Ireland would become a Colony. On this much-vexed question he had a word or two to say. As what was called an "Extreme Nationalist," he would say he did not regard as entirely palatable the idea that for ever and a day Ireland's voice should be excluded from the Councils of an Empire which the genius and valour of her sons had done so much to build up, and of which she was to remain a part. He conceived, however, that, even in the Bill as it stood, permanent exclusion of Irish Members was not contemplated; and the Premier, by one of the modifications which he had announced, had provided that by Address the Irish Parliament could obtain the right of being heard at Westminster whenever it desired. Beyond this, at present, they did not desire to go. They looked at this matter as practical men. If they got their Irish Assembly, Heaven knew they would have a task heavy and weighty enough in the effort to bind together the disunited fragments of the nation, and to repair the shattered fortunes of their unfortunate country—a task which would tax all the resources, all the talent, and all the industry of Irishmen. He did believe that if that work was to be satisfactorily performed, they could not stand the additional drain rendered necessary by representation in that House. Further than this, he did not see how such representation was, under present conditions, practicable. The federal idea he understood and sympathized with. He looked forward to the day when it would be applied to England, Scotland, and Wales, as well as Ireland. Then the character of the so-called Imperial Parliament would be changed. It would be then only an Imperial Parliament, and all the Kingdoms, having their own National Parliaments, might be represented in it. But if Ireland alone had a Parliament of her own, he did not see how she could be permanently represented in what was not only the Imperial Parliament, but the Legislature of England and of Scotland. If such representation were admitted, they should either allow Irishmen who had sole control of Irish affairs to interfere in and probably decide purely English and Scotch affairs—an obvious injustice—or else they must do what the Premier declared it surpassed the wit of man to accomplish—namely, make a definite and permanent distinction between Imperial and local affairs. The hon. and learned Member who last spoke had said he believed that the concession of autonomy to Ireland would lead to separation. If he professed to believe that Ireland would be disaffected under the Bill, he would ask how Ireland was held now?

LORD ARTHUR HILL (Down, W.): by force.

MR. JOHN REDMOND said, he thanked the noble Lord for the word. It was now held by force; but did the present Bill propose to take away that force, which, he presumed, meant the English Army and Navy and the Police? No; it still left these forces under Imperial control. But in addition to physical force, they would have working on the side of connection and against separation the moral force springing from justice conceded, which the English Government of Ireland had never yet had upon its side. He now came to what, after all, seemed to be the chief objection to Home Rule in the minds of most Englishmen, and which might be summed up in the word "Ulster." Ulster, they said, was a Protestant and anti-Nationalist Province, and could not be put under the dominion of a Nationalist Parliament in Dublin. But let him ask, was Ulster either Protestant or anti-Nationalist? First, was Ulster Protestant? Last year a Return was issued by Parliament giving the religious denominations of the population of Ulster. From that it appeared that 48 per cent of the whole population was Catholic, and remaining 52 per cent was made up of all other creeds, and, leaving Belfast out, the Catholics were to-day 55 per cent of the whole population. But their case was stronger even than that. It had recently been pointed out that Ulster might well be divided into two distinct portions—one portion consisting of Antrim and portions of Down and Armagh, containing a majority of Protestants, they being three-fourths of the population; the other portion, consisting of Donegal, Tyrone, Derry, Fermanagh, Cavan, Monaghan, and portions of Down and Armagh, containing a majority of Catholics, they being two-thirds of the population. The exact figures were—in the first portion, Catholics 188,289, Protestants 542,862; in the second portion, Catholics 645,279, and Protestants 316,647. In the face of these facts, could Ulster truthfully be termed a Protestant Province? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham spoke of the necessity of a separate Parliament for Ulster. His object was to protect the Protestants. But surely if any Protestants wanted protection, they were not those in Ulster, but those in the South and West who were in such a miserable minority. But would a Parliament in Ulster fulfil his object even in that Province? Why, Sir, unless the entire basis of representation be changed, such a Parliament must inevitably contain a majority of Catholics. Now, let him ask, was Ulster anti-National? The answer was supplied by the returns at the last elections. Out of the nine counties of Ulster, only one—namely, Antrim—went solid against Home Rule, and if his hon. Friend the Member for Sligo (Mr. Sexton) had secured 38 more votes, not even one solitary county in Ulster or in Ireland would have declared against Home Rule. Four entire counties—Donegal, Fermanagh, Cavan, and Monaghan—went solid for Home Rule. The remaining four counties—namely, Derry, Tyrone, Armagh, and Down—were so divided that the net result was to give the Nationalists a clear majority of the Ulster seats, while Belfast and Derry were only lost by 37 and 27 votes. In the face of these facts, it was the utmost folly to speak of Ulster as anti-National. There was one somewhat frivólous matter to which he would wish to refer—the warlike intentions of a certain Party in Ireland. He held in his hand an interesting statement from a well-known gentleman in Ireland. Writing on this subject, he said—

> "If the men of Ulster fight at all it will not be with the rest of Ireland, but with each other. The men of Antrim, Down, and Armagh, before conquering Leinster, Connaught, and Munster, will have to take in hand the subjugation of the six other Ulster counties. Ditches will have to be lined, not merely North of the Boyne, but West of the Bann—not merely from Belfast to Dublin, but from Belfast to Donegal, and from Armagh to Derry. In short, the idea of the Protestant portion of Ulster conquering the Catholic portion is as absurd as the contention that Lancashire could conquer the Northern counties of England. Although there are Orangemen and Protestants in every one of the nine Ulster counties, it is only in Antrim, Down, and Armagh that they could assemble in sufficient strength to overawe the local Catholics. However, although it is the wildest nonsense to imagine anything of the kind, let it be understood that the Orangemen in the North-East of Ulster have taken up arms under the command of Major Saunderson and Mr. Johnson, of Ballykilbeg, with a view to the reduction and occupation of the remainder of the Province as the result of the Repeal of the Union. To begin with, on entering Monaghan, the Orange army, or rather mob, would find itself in a county inhabited by 27,000 Protestants and 76,000 Catholics. On pushing forward into Cavan, the Orangemen would be amongst 25,000 Protestants and 105,000 Catholics. In Fermanagh, their task of subjugation would be comparatively light, as the Catholics in that county are only 56 per cent; but in Donegal, the Orange army or mob, or rather what remained of it, would be simply swallowed up, for in that wildly remote and extensive and inhospitable region, possessing admirable facilities for a defensive warfare, the Protestants are only 48,000 in number, the Catholics being 158,000."

He (Mr. J. Redmond) ought to apologize for even alluding shortly to this matter; but he had done so for the purpose of enlivening the somewhat tedious character of his remarks. He deeply regretted having to speak of Protestants and Catholics in connection with the matter at all. Theirs was not a sectarian but a national movement. If Home Rule were granted, the Protestant minority would have equal rights and liberties with their Catholic fellow-countrymen. The truth was the Catholics of Ireland entertained feelings of deep respect and affection for their Protestant fellow-countrymen. Protestants had led the national movements of Ireland for generations. A Protestant Parliament in 1793 struck the first blow at the Penal Code and commenced the work of Catholic Emancipation; Protestant patriots had shed their blood on the scaffold and in the field in defence of the liberties of their Catholic countrymen; and there was not a single one of the Catholic Leaders of the people to-day who would not reject with scorn and derision any settlement of the National Question which did not secure for the Protestants of Ireland full civil and religious liberty. Some hon. Members in this House—Radicals in principle—objected to the first Order which was proposed in this Bill as being contrary to Democratic ideas. Did they think that we were less Democratic than they were, and did they wonder why we accepted such provisions? He would tell them. It was because, although they knew the fears of their Protestant fellow-countrymen were unworthy and unfounded fears, at the same time they recognized those fears, and they desired by every means in their power to give guarantees to every section and every creed amongst their countrymen, that their sole object in this movement was to build up a united and a prosperous Irish nation. On the details he would not speak further than he had done, and he had only a few more words to say in conclusion. A passing allusion was made by the Prime Minister in his great speech in introducing this great measure to the historic mission of Lord Fitzwilliam to Ireland in 1795. It seemed to him (Mr. J. Redmond) that there were many circumstances connected with the present situation similar to the circumstances which attended the mission of Lord Fitzwilliam. At that time the Irish Parliament had commenced the work of Catholic Emancipation, and at last Edmund Burke and some others had induced the English Cabinet to adopt a policy of conciliation and emancipation, and Lord Fitzwilliam was the bearer of a message of peace to

Ireland, as the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary was the bearer of a message of peace to Ireland the other day. The hopes of the Irish people were raised high, and it would be difficult indeed for any man to say how entirely different the whole course of Irish history might have been if Lord Fitzwilliam had been allowed to carry his policy into effect; but evil counsels prevailed in England; the policy of conciliation—that policy which had since been acknowledged as a policy of justice—was wrecked. The policy of justice was reversed. Lord Fitzwilliam was withdrawn, and a return was made to the old, old policy of repression. Then followed the rebellion of 1798, and the many disasters which had marked the connection of the two countries. He did not wish to be a prophet of evil. He did not believe that similar results would follow from the wrecking of this Bill; but remember the words of Henry Grattan when he said—

> "Lord Fitzwilliam is offering to the Empire the affection of millions of hearts."

He asked them, was the offering of the affection of millions of hearts which the Prime Minister was to-day making to the Empire to be rejected as was the offering of Lord Fitzwilliam? One thing English politicians must make up their minds about, and that was that this question must be settled, and every moment of delay increased the difficulties and dangers of that position. Every speech conceived in a bitter spirit, by either Irishmen or Englishmen, must tend to increase the evils and dangers of the moment. The spirit in which the Prime Minister had addressed himself to the question, the spirit of large-heartedness and justice which he exhibited, had called forth a responsive feeling in the breasts of the Irish people right round the world. If that be the spirit in which Englishmen addressed themselves to the consideration of this question, then he had some hope for the near future of Ireland. But if passion and prejudice, if forgetfulness of the history of Ireland, and impatience at her faults were allowed once again to sway the public mind and to influence Parliament, he confessed he could not look forward to the near future without the gravest apprehension. Should calamity follow an unwise and hasty rejection of this Bill, they, at any rate, would not be responsible, for they would allow no act or word of theirs to intensify the dangers and difficulties of the situation. They made their appeal to-day to the newly-enfranchised Democracy of England. Eternal would be its honour through all the ages, and priceless would be its recompense, if its first great work, after achieving its own enfranchisement, should be to fill up the gulf of hatred and distrust which for so long a time had divided the two nations, by a just and a wise concession to that national sentiment in Ireland, which, however much some Englishmen might affect to deride it, had yet dominated Irish character for seven centuries, and must be recognized and respected, if Ireland was ever to become—as he fervently prayed she might become—a peaceful, free, and loyal portion of their Empire.

MR. BOYD-KINNEAR (Fife, E.) said, that if he desired, with very great diffidence, to say a few words upon this momentous question, it was for two reasons—first, because he belonged to a nationality which still claimed to be a nation; and, secondly, because he had been for a great many years endeavouring to urge the claims of Ireland to that which they had now come to recognize as simple justice—namely, a greater extent of self-government than that which she had hitherto been allowed to exercise. It was a matter for the most sincere rejoicing that the country had now apparently come to recognize and sympathize with that desire to do fuller justice to Ireland; and he thought that this was the real meaning and explanation of the meetings which had taken place during the Recess. Those meetings had almost with unanimity declared their approval of the principle involved in the Bills now before the House; but they had, at the same time, declared with equal unanimity that their approval was limited to the principle of looking upon the Bills as a basis for some legislation, while, at the same time, they had carefully refrained from expressing any approval of the precise legislation which was laid before the House. This circumstance pointed out a most material difference between the approval of the country on this matter and the approval that it had been in the habit of giving to other legislative proposals. When a question had been thoroughly considered by the country, and when a great

Minister had brought forward his scheme for carrying into effect the wishes of the country, it was usual to see that that scheme embraced not merely in its general principle but in all its details, down sometimes to the most minute particulars; and the demand of the country was that it should be carried into effect in the shape in which it was laid before the House of Commons. We were accustomed to the words, "The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill;" but with regard to this measure such a sentiment had not been heard in any portion of the country. On the contrary, what the country wanted was the principle of the Bill—not the whole Bill—and something not in the Bill besides. What the country really desired was that there should be given to Ireland exactly the same amount of equality in our legislation as was enjoyed by England and Scotland. That was the desire, and the principle of the new democracy, the sentiment, was one of brotherhood, that all should be equal from whatever part of the Kingdom they came. But, at the same time, the country had a very distinct perception of the difficulty in carrying this into effect. If, then, some had dissented from the way in which this measure was framed, it was scarcely just to declare that the sentiments and instincts of the people were on one side and the criticism of class on the other. Those opposed to this Bill had no interest in opposing it; they had the same feelings and motives as those who supported it. But what they did feel from their education and their habits of investigation was that the Bill was inadequate to carry out the desires which, to a certain extent, it embodied. That was the reason why they found, on the one hand, the country almost unanimously expressing a desire for something which was vaguely expressed as Home Rule, but expressing, at the same time, a distinct disapprobation of the particular details by which this Bill proposed to carry it out. Thus the mass of the people left to the educated classes the duty of discussing the details of the Bill, of pointing out its errors and mistakes, and of finding some way of carrying its principles into effect without subjecting them to the effect and the consequences of those mistakes. Now, in undertaking so serious a task as that of creating a new Constitution not merely for Ireland, but for England and Scotland at the same time, we naturally looked round for examples and precedents from which to gain some information and guidance. We were referred by the Prime Minister to certain unions of States and federal arrangements in existence in Europe and America. But in every system of federation there was one absolutely essential condition, and that was that there should be equality between the States federated. Where only two States were federated, such as Austria and Hungary, though differing in the proportion of three to two in population and wealth, whenever they came to discuss Imperial questions, they did so on the footing of absolute equality. The Delegations which were to decide on Imperial affairs were composed of an exactly equal number of Representatives of the two States; and so strongly was that principle of equality maintained that if from any cause one Member was absent the consultation was not held that day. In cases where a large number of States were federated, such as Switzerland, the United States, and Canada, the basis of union was that the Provinces, while having autonomy within their own borders upon their local affairs, should assemble in Congress to settle affairs which concerned the whole on a footing of perfect equality. But all these conditions which experience had prescribed and reason had approved were violated in the Constitution now proposed to be conferred on Ireland. The people of Ireland were to be excluded—unless the wit of man could devise some method which we were told the wit of man could not devise—from any participation in Imperial affairs. They were to be excluded from any concern with the Foreign and Colonial affairs of the Empire, of which they still formed a part; from any share in the control of the Army or Navy, to the maintenance of which they were still to contribute; from the right of participating in the discussion of Treaties, or of any question of general taxation, unless there was a necessity of changing the proportion of taxation between the two countries. While thus shut out from the common interests of the nation, they were even in Dublin to be forbidden to deal with the chief interests of their own country. They were not to be allowed to consider the affairs of the Church of their own country; they were going to have a Land Act passed for them by that House, which he presumed they were not entitled to alter; they were to be forbidden to make laws for their own trade, or navigation, or currency; and they were to be subject to a tribute, which was to be collected without their having any power to object. More than that, let them look at their position when it was said they were to have control of the Executive, and a Ministry of their own. Under what conditions would they exercise authority over the Executive? By control over taxation and refusing supplies? They would have no such power, for the chief Executive officers would be paid out of the tribute, which they could not refuse. Then the Irish Parliament was going to be divided into Orders, and to consist of a rich class and a poor class, and it was not to have the power to change the functions and relations of those two Orders. Thus all the rights of self-government which belonged to the humblest of our Colonies were to be denied to Ireland. There was yet another point. A veto was to be reserved to the Sovereign authority with regard to the Acts of the Irish Parliament. In this country the Queen had a veto, but for 150 years it had not been exercised. They might as well say that the Divine right of the Sovereign would be resuscitated. The one was as great an anachronism as the other; but they were told by the Chief Secretary at Glasgow that they were not to regard the veto in the case of Ireland as a paper veto. If it was to be an active veto who would advise the Sovereign, who though Sovereign of Ireland was Sovereign of Great Britain also, to exercise it? Would it not be the British Ministry which was under the control of the Imperial Parliament, and which would still appoint the Viceroy? Then was not that the subjection of Ireland still to the authority of the inhabitants of Great Britain? What a mockery of self-government was this! Their Irish Friends said they were willing to accept that Constitution. But the Liberals of this country could not make themselves a party to a Constitution which violated in all essential particulars the principles of liberty for which they had contended for so many centuries. He ventured also to say that the Representatives of Ireland in this Parliament had no right to accept the Constitution offered them by the Bill. He knew the Irish Members claimed to represent five-sixths of the people of Ireland, and as regards their own numbers that was perhaps true; but when they looked at the number of the electors it was scarcely true. He had made a calculation on the subject, and as nearly as he could make out, and allowing for all uncontested elections, the Nationalist Members had been elected by, in round numbers, 400,000 out of a total of 700,000 electors. So great a change ought not to be made on the demand of what was, after all, not much more than a bare majority of the nation. If that were the case, must they not also add to the difficulties he had enumerated that further and most serious difficulty which was comprised in the word—which he used not geographically, but merely as a word of general description—Ulster? There was a portion of the Irish population which lived in that Province which was capable of definition, and which was decidedly opposed to being placed under the proposed Constitution. Therefore, on the very same principle on which the Nationalist Party were entitled to say they accepted this Constitution for the people they represented, those who represented that portion of Ulster were entitled to say they did not want it, and did not desire to come under it. If the Nationalists were perfectly prepared to let them go, that would simplify the matter very much, and would commend itself to justice; but if not, neither were the people of England and Scotland justified in placing them under this Constitution, if they desired to remain united with us. This was a serious difficulty which would have to be encountered and solved. Having presented these difficulties on behalf of the plan proposed, he knew he should be met with the question, "What is your plan?" A private Member who had no Ministerial responsibility was not precluded from suggesting an alternative plan; and his alternative was that of simple justice to Ireland on the same footing as justice was claimed for Scotland and for England and Wales. If he was asked, how was that justice to be obtained, sitting in a House such as this, where the Irish were in a minority, he would invite them to look at the way in which justice was obtained, not, he admitted, to a perfect degree, but still in a sufficiently practical way, by Scotland and England and Wales. Scotland was as much a nation, and its national feeling was as strong as it was in Ireland. It was a nation as proud of its past history. It still insisted on being treated as an independent people. It still maintained its laws and institutions, and had its laws modified according to its own opinion and ideas. Scotland did obtain justice to a considerable and nearly to a sufficient extent by the recognition, on the part of Parliament, that it was entitled to be treated in that way, and that where there was anything approaching unanimity on the part of its Representatives upon any subject, it was a thing that Englishmen were bound to grant. He knew they had occasionally reason to complain, as, for instance, in the case of the Crofters Bill, where the Government refused the Amendments brought forward by Scottish Members. That, however, was the fault of the Government, and not of the Constitution of the country; and what he was arguing for was that the Constitution should be preserved, and the ways of the Government altered. In the past so-called remedial legislation for Ireland, even when conducted by a Liberal Government, the Bills did not emanate from Ireland, or from Irish Members; but they emanated from the Treasury Bench, and, as a rule, the suggestions of Irish Members were not accepted. This was why such a striking want of success had attended the "judicious mixtures" of the past. The measures were proposed by Englishmen and administered by Englishmen. They ought to have been proposed by Irishmen and administered by them. The anomalies of Private Bill legislation in London for Ireland should have been remedied by inquiries carried on by Commission in Ireland. The dissatisfaction with the administration of Dublin Castle could easily be got rid of. The Representatives of Ireland might themselves propose measures to remedy the defects of the Land Act and to stop unfair evictions; and such measures would be welcomed on all sides of the House, accepted by the people of this country, and carried into effect without difficulty, under the new impulse which had been given to that House by the democratic feeling. If there was to be a Constitution for Ireland, let it come from Ireland, proposed by Irishmen, and then let Englishmen judge whether it was or was not consonant with their own ideas; but do not let them have it proposed from the Treasury Bench, and combined, as it was at the present moment, with an Arms Bill, which was to be imposed upon Ireland for two years, without any power to Irishmen to repeal it. There was the simple and obvious plan by which, without any violation of the Constitution, without any enactment of new methods, without any stoppage of the business of Ireland, England, or Scotland, they might have the same measure of justice done to all parts of the United Kingdom, by the United Legislature, and by which beneficial measures might be passed in sympathy with the desire of the Members of the three nations. This was the offer which the people of this country made to Ireland. He did not profess to be the mouthpiece of the new democracy of this country; but, at all events, he asked Irishmen to look to the sentiment which had been expressed by the new democracy, and judge whether it was not certain that whatever measures were proposed for the good of Ireland they would support. And he hoped that, thus working together in mutual sympathy and assistance, they would be able to maintain a real and lasting Union.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing): I am sorry to stand between the House and any other Members whom individual sections of the House may wish to hear. The question before the House is of such magnitude that I can quite understand there should be considerable competition to obtain a hearing. The House listened with great interest to the speech of the Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) in the early part of the evening—first, because he is the only right hon. Gentleman who had held the Office of Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant who supports this Bill; and, secondly, because it had been intimated that he would convey to the House some further development of the policy of Her Majesty's Government, and of the concessions which they are disposed to make to those who are not prepared to support the Bill in its present shape. The right hon. Gentleman made a very strong assertion when he said that we are all agreed as to the principle contained in the Bill. My strong impression is, after having listened to the debate throughout, that the great majority of the Members of this House are opposed to the principle of the Bill; and it is because they are so opposed to it that the Government are endeavouring to whittle it down and surround it with a number of proper safeguards, which will prevent the House and the public from seeing its full proportions, or the machinery, or motive power, which is behind it to set it in motion. What, Sir, is the principle of this Bill? If the House will allow me, I will point out the position in which I and my near Relatives will be placed if this measure is passed. My three Brothers and I happen to be Irishmen, who have the honour of holding seats in the present Parliament. If this Bill passes, all of us, who now have equal rights, will be divided into equal classes. Certain of us will be called upon to take part in Imperial matters, and to give up our control over Irish affairs, while others, who have some control over the latter, will not be allowed to participate in any way in Imperial legislation. It is to that principle that the House objects, because they see that in that principle is contained what must result in the disruption of this Empire. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War made use of a most unhappy illustration. He said—"After all, what is it but taking wine out of one large bottle and dividing it among smaller ones; the quantity would remain the same." Now, Sir, if the right hon. Gentleman had been as great a *connoisseur* in wine as the right hon. and learned Gentleman whom he followed is a legal scientist, he would know that to subdivide wine in one large bottle, and to put it into a number of small bottles, deprives it, not only of its potency, but of most of its flavour. Sir, I will divide the principle of this Bill into three bottles, and I will assume that there is a Parliament for Ireland, which has power to legislate for Irish affairs, but has no control over Imperial affairs; and there is a Parliament in England which has exclusive control over English affairs, but none in Imperial; and a Parliament in Scotland similarly situated. Where is your Imperial Parliament? Disguise it as you like, this Bill asks you to take the first step down the incline, the result of which will lead to the annihilation of the Imperial Parliament itself. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War went on to express a hope that if this Bill is adopted, social order and respect for law may be established in Ireland. He gave us two reasons for his change of opinion, for, on November 12 last, the last occasion on which he spoke on this subject before accepting Office, he said there would be great difficulty in giving Ireland a separate Parliament, because it would not be consistent with the maintenance of the integrity of the Empire and of duty to the Crown.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL - BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): Perhaps my noble Friend will allow me to say that, in the first place, that was not the last occasion on which I spoke on this subject; and also that he now quotes a single sentence extracted from a newspaper report of a speech of considerable length which I made at a meeting. If he will refer to the whole of the speech, he will see that in its general gist and purport it is not at all inconsistent with my present views.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: Well, Sir, I hope that at least one good result will follow from the incidents of this debate, and that the Members of Her Majesty's Government will take care in future to be accurately reported. At present, it is a remarkable circumstance that, no matter what journal we quote, it somehow or other happens that the reporter is not accurate.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I did not say that the report was inaccurate.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: There were two reasons given for the introduction of this Bill. The first was, that there were 85 Members of Parliament returned from Ireland in favour of a Parliamentary recognition of their nationality. Why, Sir, we told the Government that last year. That was no surprise; and when we pointed out to the Prime Minister and the Government that, under the Reform Bill, the Loyalist and the Unionist populations in Ireland would be under-represented, in consequence of the manner in which they were distributed throughout Ireland, the reply of the Prime Minister was to the effect that it might not be possible to give them adequate representation, but they must trust and rely upon the Scotch and English Members. Now, because our prediction is true, and the 85 Nationalist Members have been returned, the safeguard with which the House was induced to assent to the Reform Bill vanishes, and because the Loyalists are under-represented, they are to be deprived of their safeguard and protection? That is a perfect specimen of the Prime Minister's safeguards. What is the second reason? That Her Majesty's late Government declined to renew the Crimes Act; and we have been told time after time, because we declined to ask the House to assent to coercion last year, that therefore a Parliament must be established in Dublin. What are the circumstances under which we refused to ask Parliament for a renewal of the Crimes Act? We found ourselves in circumstances in which I am confident that any Government would have arrived at the same conclusion as we did. Now, Sir, what was the position in which we found ourselves? An enormous political concession had just been made to Ireland, almost as great as that which the Government are now proposing. There was little crime then. The days of the late Parliament were numbered. We said, in the circumstances, that we would trust the Leaders of the National League, and we would rely upon them to stop the system of intimidation which existed in certain parts of Ireland. The Leaders of the National League either could not, or would not, stop that intimidation; and because that intimidation has increased fourfold, the Prime Minister now says that those Gentlemen who could not, or would not, stop intimidation shall be trusted with the entire legislative and administrative authority in Ireland. [Mr. GLADSTONE dissented.] I say that because the system of intimidation has increased you bring in this Bill. If hon. Members below the Gangway had been able to stop intimidation and the law had been obeyed, this Bill would not have been brought in. It is because the law is not obeyed that you have brought the Bill in. It, therefore, amounts to this—that because a certain number of Gentlemen have so managed their Organization as to successfully defy the law, they are to be made hereafter the Authority which is to make and administer the law. I agree that there is little sympathy in many parts of Ireland with the laws passed by this House; but when the Prime Minister says it is our duty to bring the law in sympathy with the Irish population, what is meant? Is the objection to the law that it is passed by this House, or is it from an inherent dislike to the law itself? If the Parliament in Ireland attempts to enforce those laws which we believe to be just, and which are now in existence, they will have as much difficulty as the Parliament here. What they are to do is to alter the law; and what is the law which is most unpopular? The law which stops intimidation; and, therefore, if you are to bring your law in sympathy with the popular wishes, you must abolish the law which stops intimidation and legalize it; and that is the method which the Prime Minister proposes in order to re-establish social order in Ireland. Now, Sir, if the House will allow me, I will ask them to go back with me a step in English history. We have had a great many authorities quoted as to the means by which the Union was carried, and as to the consequences which repealing that Legislative Union entailed upon the country. It is a remarkable fact that there has been but one Prime Minister of England who has ever had any practical experience of an independent Parliament in Ireland, and that was Mr. Pitt. Mr. Pitt took Office in December, 1783, and the last Act passed by this House which gave entire independence to the Irish Parliament was passed in the middle of that year. Let us see what were Mr. Pitt's motives in bringing the Union forward. He had had experience of an independent Parliament in Ireland. He was most anxious to establish complete freedom of commercial relations between this country and Ireland. He had been thwarted in his desires by intrigues in this and in the other House of Parliament. Mr. Pitt was most anxious to emancipate the Roman Catholics; but when the attempt was made intrigue and faction played their part, and Lord Fitzwilliam, who, I must say, seems to have shown very little discretion, was recalled; but it was not by Mr. Pitt's wish.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Mid Lothian): Mr. Pitt was Prime Minister.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: If the Prime Minister wishes to go back to that period he will find that the men who were instrumental in obtaining the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam were most opposed to the Union. Mr. Pitt was compelled, in spite of himself, to recall Lord Fitzwilliam. The two great objects stated in Mr. Pitt's speech in introducing the Bill for the Union were to establish perfect freedom of commerce and trade in Ireland, and to abolish religious disabilities. Will any man say, if we repeal the Union, that there is not a danger of Ireland going back to the same condition as in 1783? Mr. Pitt was engaged in a great war. The conduct of that war was to him a source of anxiety scarcely less than the existence of an independent Parliament in Ireland. There was a terrible revolt in Ireland, which, I believe, would never have occurred except for the existence of an Irish Parliament. That revolt was put down with great severity, and the very men who were most opposed to clemency were the men most opposed to the Union. Therefore, Mr. Pitt, in proposing the Union between the two countries, was not asking the House to legislate on hypothetical assumptions, but was asking them to legislate upon the terrible experience of the past 15 or 20 years, and that experience brought home to him and all his Cabinet the fact that unless the Union was made Constitutional all government must either be suspended in Ireland or separation between the two countries must ensue. Now, what are the circumstances in which this Bill is brought forward? The enterprize of the Prime Minister involves tremendous risk in the future; but he will not share that risk. Whatever popularity accrues from this Bill will be monopolized by the right hon. Gentleman; younger men will have to face the danger of its failure. Much as we admire the ability of the right hon. Gentleman, we must recollect that, although successful in many of his political ventures, his past Irish legislation has failed. [*Cries of* "No!"] It has failed in this sense—that it has not finished its work. I recollect that on every occasion the ground on which we were asked to adopt it was that it would be final; and we are now again asked to adopt this legislation because it is to be final; but in a very few years we shall be told that it has not finished its work, because it has not touched the goal of Irish National independence. The reason why Mr. Pitt used his best efforts and all his influence to carry the Union was because he realized the fact that the Irish nation was not homogeneous. The history of Ireland has been the history of perpetual internecine strife between different sections of the people—[Mr. W. O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.): Who made it so?]—and the unpleasant part of her history is this, that whatever faction has had the upper hand has made an unfair use of its power; but of all the parties who have ever exercised this power, none has made a more remorseless and brutal use of it than the Land League and National League. There are many Members who object to anything savouring of coercion. Are they sure this Bill is not a Coercion Bill? If a misuse is made of the provisions of this measure, and if the Loyalist minority are ill-treated, you will have deprived yourselves of the power of interference. Under the Bill a large portion of the population may be reduced to a position of perpetual servitude, and be treated as aliens in the land with which their families have been connected for centuries. ["No!"] This House is to be the Parliament of a foreign country, and the laws passed in Ireland only are to be national laws. In this country, according to the Prime Minister, there is to be a foreign Parliament, while the Parliament of Ireland is to be a National Parliament. [Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I never said so.] I should like the House to consider with me who, and how many, are the Unionists and Loyalists who object to this Bill? What proportion do they form of the people of Ireland? Hon. Members below the Gangway have with great skill absorbed five-sixths of the representation of Ireland, but they do not represent five-sixths of the people. I am going to state one or two facts. There are 103 Members from Ireland. There were 24 uncontested seats at the last Election, of which 20 are held by Nationalists and four by Conservatives. That gives the former a balance of 16 on the uncontested seats. There were 79 contested elections. The Nationalists polled 293,952 votes, or 66 per cent—[An Irish MEMBER: Much more than that.] Pardon me, these figures are taken from official Returns—and the Unionists 144,826, or 34 per cent; yet we hold only 14 seats instead of 26, which is the number we ought to hold, and they hold 65 instead of 52; and while every Nationalist Member represents 4,591 voters, each Unionist Member represents 10,355. Hon. Members are very proud of the tactics by which they secured a majority of the representation of the Province of Ulster. They were very adroit. The question of the Union was never brought forward; no addresses were issued, and the question of the land was alone kept in the foreground. The question of Union or Separation was kept entirely in the back ground. In the counties of Ulster the Nationalists hold 16 seats, and the Loyalists 11. Three were uncontested, of which two are held by Unionists, and one is filled by a Nationalist. The followers of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) polled 62,694 votes, or 4,822 for every Member; while the Unionists polled 91,563, or 10,173 for every Member. If you will look at these figures you will see what I have always maintained—that if you take the Unionists throughout Ireland they number one-third of the population. Let me take the next test. Are these men who have returned the Friends of the hon. Member for the City of Cork ignorant and illiterate, or are they capable citizens? I have statistics here of the voters in every county of Ulster. Two counties returned four Members. The representation of Donegal is monopolized by the Nationalists, the representation of Antrim by the Unionists. In the latter county the percentage of illiterate voters in the different divisions is less than 3 per cent; but in North Donegal the percentage is 42, in East Donegal 38·6, and in South Donegal 52·2. In Belfast, out of four seats, three were uncontested by Nationalists. The average number of illiterate voters in these was 3 per cent. In the one division where a contest took place the number was 13 per cent. In Down, which has four seats, two were uncontested, and are held by Unionists. In North Down, two Unionists went to the poll, and the number of illiterate voters was 2 per cent; in South Down, where a Nationalist was successful, 22 per cent of the voters were illiterates. Having looked through these figures I may say that about one-third of all the Nationalist votes polled in Ireland were given by persons who can neither read nor write. Therefore, not merely are the Loyalists of Ireland one-third of the population; but I say unhesitatingly that if you take any of the *criteria* by which you judge who are capable citizens—intelligence, thrift, freedom from crime, absence of pauperism, capacity for work, success in industrial occupation, or improved methods of agriculture—if you take any one of these tests you will find more capable citizens among the Unionists than among the Nationalists. And when you go to the statistics of crime the facts are more remarkable still—particularly in Ulster, as compared with the South and West. In all parts where the influence of the new legislation is supreme, crime, disorder, and ignorance are in the ascendancy. I ask, then, is it right, under these circumstances, to pass a measure which is likely to be terribly detrimental to the interests of men who have done all they can to promote the prosperity of the country to which they belong? The Prime Minister was good enough some years ago, not only to describe the course of action and the qualifications of the new Prime Minister for Ireland, but he also gave us, in that eloquent phraseology of which he is so great a master, an exact description of that system of government to which we shall hereafter be subjected. Speaking at the Guildhall, on October 13, 1881, of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell), the Prime Minister used the following language:—

> "Within the last few moments I have been informed that the first step towards the vindication of law, of order, of the rights of property, of the freedom of the land, of the first elements of political life and civilization—that the first step has been taken in the arrest of the man who, unhappily, from motives which I do not challenge, which I cannot examine, with which I have nothing to do—who, unhappily, has made himself beyond all others prominent in the attempt to destroy the authority of the law, to substitute what could end in being nothing more or less than anarchial oppression exercised upon the people of Ireland."

I believe that that is a very accurate description of what will occur in Ireland if this Bill passes; and does it not exhibit an extraordinary amount of confidence in hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway to assume that you may safely hand over the administration and execution of the law in Ireland, and place in power in Ireland, and intrust with supreme authority in that country, the Leaders of the Association which, not so very long ago, issued the "No Rent Manifesto," and that you can trust them to act for 49 years as rent collectors and process servers for an alien Parliament? On what grounds does the Prime Minister assume that the mere attainment of supreme power by the Nationalist Leader, whom the right hon. Gentleman described in the terms to which I have referred, will work a miraculous transformation in his opinions and his objects, and that the hon. Gentleman and his Friends will completely forget everything they have ever said and done?—as the right hon. Gentleman himself appears to have done since his recent conversion. But supposing the hon. Member for the City of Cork and his Friends do not change their opinions—and here I am bound to express the pleasure with which I listened to the speeches made in this debate by the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. W. O'Brien) and the hon. Member for Wexford (Mr. J. Redmond), and the kindly welcome they gave us to join them and heartily to co-operate with them. Yes, but that was not the language which those hon. Members used when carrying on their agitation. When Mr. Lecky said that any man who supposed that this measure would tend to establish law and order in Ireland, and to promote the unity of the Empire, must be either a fool or a traitor, he had in view the kind of writing which had distinguished *United Ireland*, and which he said he had read for the last three years. I give hon. Members below the Gangway all credit for the skill and energy with which they have worked; but if they were once installed in Office the revolution which they have promoted would pass into its second phase—I mean the phase through which every revolution passes—namely, that of devouring its own children. Sir, it is not in their power to pledge the Irish Parliament. You have placed in this Bill a number of limitations on the power of the future Parliament. If the future Government of Ireland loyally resisted these changes, every one of them would be stepping stones to the Leader of the Opposition to obtain Office. If you plant the germ of nationality and surround it with such organisms as are proposed to be set up here, you must be prepared for the natural and inevitable result. Hon. Members below the Gangway have, in the course of the last few years, attacked every single link in the administration of justice in Ireland. They cannot therefore, in self-respect, agree to continue the existing system; they must revolutionize it; and when your safeguards disappear what will be the protection afforded to the Loyal minority in Ireland? None. Therefore, Sir, what I hope the House will understand is that this is not a Bill merely to transfer certain Executive or Legislative powers from London to Dublin, but the mere act of transfer involves a complete transformation of the body to which it is to be transferred, and a complete revolution of the uses to which it is to be put. An hon. Member was good enough the other night to be candid on this point. He said that the National League was the apostolic successor of the Land League, and that the National League would be abolished as soon as you constitute the future Irish Parliament. There is a name not very popular with hon. Members below the Gangway, but the name of a great Irishman—Lord Clare—and I wish to quote a short passage from the speech of Lord Clare on the Union. That distinguished man said—

> "If we are to live in a perpetual storm here (in Ireland); if it is to remain at the discretion of every adventurer, of feeble and ostentatious talents, ungoverned by a particle of judgment or discretion, to dress up fictitious grievances for popular delusions, and let loose a savage and barbarous people upon the property and respect of the Irish nation; what gentleman who has the means of living out of this country will be induced to remain in it? I do most solemnly declare that no earthly consideration short of a strong sense of duty should have induced me to remain an eye-witness of the scenes of folly and madness and horrors of every description in which I have lived for some years back; and that I had rather give up every prospect which remains to me in this country and begin a new course in my old age than submit it to the same misery and disgust for the remnant of my life. If you wish to stop emigration you must enable sober and rational men to live in peace at home."

Well now, Sir, it is perfectly clear that this Bill cannot restore social order in Ireland. That it may promote disunion and would deprive Parliament of many functions which it previously possessed has been proved beyond dispute by speeches made earlier in this debate. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War, who spoke to-night, made a proposal with a view to conciliate opponents of this Bill; but, unfortunately, in a very succinct and able argument, he destroyed it before he suggested it to the House. He proposed that Members from Ireland should come back here whenever any question relating to the Customs or Excise in Ireland was raised, and should take part in the deliberations of this House. But the right hon. Gentleman had pointed out, with great force, that this is not a mere Legislative Assembly, but that whoever obtains a majority here has the control of the Executive of the Empire. More Governments have changed on financial questions than on any other. [Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: No, no.] Take the case which only occurred last year. If I am not mistaken, I believe that the right hon. Gentleman commenced his career as a Liberal by putting out a Conservative Government on a financial question in 1852. [Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: No.] Therefore, let us see what the condition of the Government in future might be. It would be quite possible that a Government having a working majority of 80 would, upon the summoning of the Irish Members who would number 103 to decide on some question of taxation, find itself in a minority of 23. One of two things would happen—either that this House would lose all control over indirect taxation, or else the Government would have to resign. But, Sir, any system that would involve the exclusion of the Irish Members from the control of the Customs and Excise, would involve the greatest injustice to the Loyalist Party in Ireland, for if one drew a line from the centre of Donegal to the centre of Cork, one would find nine-tenths of the poverty to the West of that line, and nine-tenths of the wealth to the East of it. The poor people living in the West have, undoubtedly, been led to believe that all sorts of benefits will be obtained for them by Home Rule. But they cannot be taxed themselves, as they are so poor that no scheme of direct taxation could be devised which would affect them. The consequence is that any benefit conferred upon them would have to be paid for by the propertied class, and how small this class is may be judged from the fact that an 8*d*. Income Tax in Ireland only produces £500,000 sterling. The great mass of the propertied class are Loyalists, and whenever a collision between the two Parliaments occurred, the whole of Ireland would be united in claiming control over the Irish Customs and Excise, and then there would be an end to your fiscal unity. If this Parliament were established in Dublin, no human power could prevent it passing a Resolution like that of Grattan's Parliament, that the only authority that could make laws for the taxation of Ireland was the Sovereign and Parliament of Ireland; and it is a curious fact that one of the main recommendations of this Bill, in the eyes of its American supporters, is that it would put the Irish Parliament in such a position in future that it could extract anything it chose from the Imperial Parliament. In a great meeting, held the other day at Washington, a gentleman, Mr. Senator Riddleberger—[An hon. MEMBER: A German]—whose reputation well corresponds with his name, made an extraordinary speech. This gentleman is the Senator for Virginia, which repudiated some time ago its public debts, and he had been chiefly instrumental in effecting this, and of successfully defying the rest of the United States. [No, no!"] Well, if hon. Gentlemen will take over some of the bonds I bought a few years ago, they will know all about this repudiation, and I will be very much obliged to them. What does this expert in the art of defining local legislation say? Senator Riddleberger suggests that after the Parliament in Dublin is established, agitation should be started to remove the Viceroy of Ireland and for other purposes, and he advises the Irish people to "keep their muskets loaded for other operations." I must apologize to the House for having occupied its attention so long. If hon. Members will be kind enough to give me their attention for one or two minutes more, before concluding, I desire to say a few words on behalf of a section of Irishmen in whom I am deeply interested. I have lived a great part of my life among the people of the North of Ireland, and I assert that no more meritorious people are to be found on the whole face of the earth than the Protestant people of Ulster. They are men who have fulfilled, to the very letter, every contract and every obligation placed upon them. They have turned the poorest part of Ireland into the richest, and at a time when all other towns are decreasing in population and trade, they have elevated Belfast into one of the commercial emporiums of the Empire. They have expelled crime and outrage, and, at the instigation of the Prime Minister himself, have shown themselves the supporters of law and order. If the relations between landlord and tenant in the North of Ireland are happier than elsewhere—["No, no!"] —I say they are happier, is it not as much due to forbearance on the part of the landlords, as to the strenuous efforts of the people to fulfil their contracts? And when hon. Gentlemen allude to the fidelity with which those who purchased the Church lands have fulfilled their obligations, it should be remembered that almost all those purchasers reside in Ulster. Now, Sir, there is no disorder in Ulster; the foundations of social order are, I thank God, sound; life and property are secure. But it is not so outside of Ulster. Ulster men know perfectly well that life and property are in danger in other parts of Ireland—["No, no!"]—and many quiet and respectable men who have not hitherto taken any prominent part in politics, whose political views are opposed to my own, honestly believe that if this Bill passes into law all that makes life worth living, in a civilized community, will pass away. The House may deprecate strong language; but one must make some allowance for brave men. [*A laugh.*] Hon. Gentlemen laugh; but they must be aware that a movement in Ireland was never dangerous unless there was a Protestant at its head. If a movement is dangerous which is merely headed by a Protestant, what will be the danger of a movement in which not only the leaders, but the whole rank and file, are composed of Protestants? The House must not be surprised if brave men are seriously considering whether or not it will be better for them to risk their lives in the open rather than quietly acquiesce in a system which may render their future existence one of constant terror, or which will subject them to abject servitude. I do not deny the legal power of Parliament to place these men in such a position as that, if it thinks fit to do so; but I assert that, from a moral point of view, this House has no right to take that step, and to place these men in the power of an Association which has been denounced by the Prime Minister himself and dissolved by the Imperial Government within the last four or five years as a treasonable and a criminal Association, or else to compel them to expatriate themselves or have recourse to civil war. But, putting the matter on the lowest and meanest ground, I contend that the policy of the abandonment of our allies does not pay in the long run. The late Parliament tried that method twice. They abandoned our allies in South Africa, and they left General Gordon to perish in the Soudan. But, in both instances, although the nation lost reputation, we did not save our money, and we did not save the lives of our soldiers; while the very difficulties we sought to escape, when we embarked upon that course, have more tightly entangled themselves around us. Such were the acts of the late Parliament. But this is a new Parliament, and it represents to a greater extent than any previous one the manhood of this country. Will it inaugurate its legislative career by giving its assent to a course which would be a discredit to the puniest nation in the last hours of its existence? Those who oppose this Bill do so because they believe that it will not restore social order in Ireland, but that it may endanger the integrity of the Empire. We oppose it on still higher grounds. We are conscious of the difficulties in the way of the Government of Ireland, and we are aware of our responsibility for any vote which we may give on this question; but we hold that, no matter what may be the difficulties which may encircle the affairs of a free and honourable people, no temporary respite, and, still less, no permanent relief from them, will be found in turpitude and political blindness.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I can well recollect the time when, some years ago, I used to take part in the debates of this House that we were accustomed to be taunted and represented as the Party of disorder and rebellion; but after having listened for some time patiently to the speeches delivered by my fellow-countrymen who sit above the Gangway, I think the time has come, or will come, when the title will be transferred to the English Members in another part of the House, particularly if speeches continue to be delivered in the tone of the one we have just heard from the noble Lord. Now, there are a few points in the speech of the noble Lord to which I would like to direct the attention of the

House for a few minutes before I enter upon the general question. First of all the noble Lord, shortly before he sat down, made a reference which I consider to be a particularly unhappy reference. In the first place he quoted, as has been very much the habit of our opponents, language—violent language—used on an American platform; and you may be perfectly certain that when he was obliged to fall back on a German Senator for language wherewith to accuse the Irish race in America of a determination not to accept this Bill as a settlement of their demands he was very hard pressed indeed. There are 10,000,000 of Irishmen in America, and the only speech the noble Lord could find to quote was a speech of Senator Riddleberger—a German—who may be a very important man; but it certainly seemed to be a very unhappy illustration of the possible future delinquencies of the Irish Parliament when the noble Lord spoke of the repudiation of a debt by Virginia. Does not every man in the House know that if there is a State in the whole length and breadth of America where the Irish race has no influence that State is Virginia? I know Virginia. I may say that I have travelled through every State in the Northern States of America; and, as I and every hon. Member who has travelled there know, not in the North or the South will you find any State where the Irish have so small a representation as in Virginia. Why, Sir, that State is the Old Dominion; every family there boasts and traces its descent from ancestors in England. The next time the noble Lord wants to cast a reproach on the Irish people, and to say that our people are disposed to repudiate their debts, he had better go elsewhere than to the Old Dominion of Virginia. The noble Lord made an excursion into Irish history. I do not propose to follow him into that excursion; but I will only say this—that as I listened to these debates I was struck—and anybody who has lived in Ireland and gained a thorough knowledge of its history must have been struck also—with wonder, amazement, and admiration at the marvellous mastery of the history of Ireland which the Prime Minister has acquired and displayed. Hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway, if they take my advice—which I do not expect they will—will avoid the history of the Union, and devote themselves to the circumstances of the present day, for I assure them they will inevitably be tripped up by the Prime Minister. The noble Lord made a statement which we feel a reproach—namely, that of the voters for National candidates one-third were illiterate voters. I do not believe that statement. The figures do not cover the whole ground, and are very great exaggerations. But if it were so, is it not a condemnation of the Government that ruled in Ireland for 80 years? Will any Member of the House stand up and declare that it is not? I do not care whether he is an Irish Tory, or an English Tory, or a Liberal, if he has travelled in Ireland he must admit that he has never met on the face of the earth a people more eager to acquire knowledge. Irish Tories will not deny that if they know the country. No doubt, there are a great many of the people who are illiterate—a great many more than we would like to confess—but that is a reproach, not to the people, but to the Government, who, until 20 years ago, stood between the Irish people and education. The little education they did get was only obtained by the most desperate exertions. I can only say on that point that I contested the Northern Division of Tyrone against a brother of the noble Lord who spoke last—one of those divisions where the Nationalists and Imperialists ran very close. I was only beaten by 429 votes; and as I attended at the polling booth on the day of election, I can only say that, as far as my observation went, there were fully as many illiterates on the other side as upon ours. I heard the men come up to the polling booth and vote. Now, there has been a statement made very frequently in the course of this debate to the effect that this concession, as they call it, is not what the Irish people ask for, and is more or less forced on the acceptance of the Irish people. Furthermore, the statement is repeated that we should go on, if we got this concession, to use it as a means of obtaining more. Now, the noble Lord made a statement which I take the liberty to contradict in reference to this very point. He said that in all the previous great measures proposed by the Prime Minister for Ireland the great argument put forward in favour of passing them was that they were final. But I ask who told him they were to be final? I defy any examination of the pages of *Hansard* to discover any speech coming from a Representative of Ireland declaring that these measures were final.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: The Prime Minister said they were final.

MR. DILLON: The strength of the point remains the same. What I ask is, who said they would be final? The Prime Minister said that he thought they would be final, or, rather, he confessed that he clung to the supposition that by legislating for Ireland according to his own ideas of justice—and, no doubt, he has given great benefits to Ireland—that he would succeed in disarming the National spirit of Ireland. He has never said, for a moment, that he had it in his mind that the National spirit would go on increasing in strength; but he did say that his experience led him, step by step, to the conviction that he was undertaking an impossible task; and, however good his intention and vast his power, all this remedial legislation would not succeed in removing disaffection and in disarming the National sentiment, which has waxed stronger day by day. We never, in a single instance, sought to deceive this House about the finality of previous measures. We state to this House, and to the English people outside this House, who will finally decide the question, that with the modifications suggested by the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) we are honest, in dealing with the Bill, in our intentions to accept the measure loyally as a settlement of the Irish Question. My hon. Friend stated when it was introduced what were the blots which would make it unworkable. We pledge ourselves to use our utmost influence and whatever popularity we possess to make the Bill acceptable to the Irish people, and to make it work honestly, not for the purpose of plundering our fellow-countrymen, not for the purpose of injuring the Protestants of Ireland, but, on the contrary, we pledge ourselves that whatever power we have with the Irish people shall be used to get this Bill accepted, not alone in its letter, but in its spirit, as a means to unite our people and to govern the country with a view to its future prosperity. When I say this it recalls to my mind a singular thing. There seems to be rooted in the minds of some men, perfectly honest in their opinions on other subjects, the belief that every Nationalist in Ireland is a fool. Do hon. Members of this House suppose we will be fools enough, when we have got a Constitution which we value, and which gives our people power, to plunge into mad excesses which would inevitably lead to the ruin of our country? What have we ever done in this House to induce hon. Members to believe that we are such fools? I think you will find, if we get our Parliament—and I believe we shall get it—that we will endeavour to work it in a spirit of friendliness, even to those who now threaten to use arms against us. The noble Lord talks about revolutions swallowing their own children. Of course there is a possibility of that kind; but the noble Lord must remember that if there is a revolution—which I do not in the least anticipate—we are the men who, according to his theory, have got to lose by the transaction more than anybody else. Now, with regard to the question which has been raised about the retention of the Irish Members in this House, I must confess this has seemed to me one of the most singular debates I ever listened to; because, early in the Session, it seemed to be agreed without a single dissentient voice, either in this House or in the country, that the one thing on which everyone was agreed was that something touching social order and the existence of society in Ireland needed to be done, and to be done at once. I heard no voice raised against that proposition. Great pressure was brought to bear on the Government to bring forward their measure; and the Government, using their utmost endeavour, came forward with a great measure, laying down a policy of enormous magnitude, and having for its object the restoration of social order in Ireland. I can understand the opposition which that policy meets from some hon. Gentlemen here, and from the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) as the Representative of his class; but there are Gentlemen whose position I have failed to understand, and to them I may say a few words by way of appeal. They have pursued a line of criticism which does not affect the principle of the Bill in the least degree; but they want certain things done, and up to the present moment we have no statement of what these things are. At this stage of the debate I think we are entitled to ask those Gentlemen to tell us what they want, in view of the awful responsibility which will rest upon the shoulders of any man who defeats this Bill and sends us back to the suffering people of Ireland with the winter before us and our hands empty. We have heard it said that at present there exists a "truce of God." The introduction of this Bill is largely accountable for that truce of God; and I earnestly appeal to those men that they will, at least, consider it their duty to formulate to the House a detailed plan of what it is they want. They will find us, I venture to say, as reasonable as men can be. We have stated our views frankly. We do not want at present a representation in this House. We prefer the proposition of the Prime Minister; but we would go a long way rather than wreck this Bill. While I am convinced it would be better for Ireland, and for England also, that the Irish Members should be allowed, at least for a time, to attend to their business in Dublin, still I do think that this question ought to be discussed in a friendly spirit and with a sense of responsibility, and, if at all possible, that some road ought to be discovered by which this Bill will be read a second time, and by which the exasperation, soreness, and uncertain vista which will be opened out to us in Ireland if this Bill be rejected should be avoided. Having made that earnest appeal, I will leave the question, hoping that some hon. Gentlemen will stand up and explain to us what it is they want. Sir, there is another question—the question of Protestantism in Ulster. I regret to see in the papers to-day a letter signed by a name so illustrious in England and so powerful in English politics as that of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain). I cannot but think that he is acting in ignorance of the affairs of Ireland; but I am satisfied that his letter will do great mischief in Ulster. The right hon. Gentleman says there are two nations in Ireland. I do not know what the right hon. Member for West Birmingham means to convey; but I know well the meaning which the Orangemen of Ulster will draw from it. It is this — "Stand to your arms and resist, and you will have the English Protestants at your back." The language, though cautious, will be plain to the Irish Protestants. It means—"If you show yourselves really in earnest, do not fear but that the English Protestants will support you." [*Opposition cheers.*] I find that my interpretation of that language is correct; but I say that any man who, from his great position and influence in this country, recklessly inflames passion in Ulster, is doing one of the most horrible and monstrous deeds possible. But, Sir, are there two nations in Ireland? ["Yes."] We have heard from the hon. and gallant Gentleman who leads the Conservative Party in Ireland—the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Major Saunderson) — constant references to what "our fathers did 200 years ago." It is very strange I have never heard him and his supporters refer to what their fathers did 100 years ago. True it is that, 200 years ago, the Protestants and Catholics of Ireland were for nearly a whole century engaged in the noble game of exterminating each other. This is the part of Irish history to which the hon. and gallant Member refers with the greatest pleasure. But another era dawned, when that Parliament, which is so offensive to some hon. Gentlemen, sat in Dublin; and let us always remember that even in that Parliament, cramped and wretched as it was, representing a miserable fraction of the population, and confined not only to Protestants, but to Episcopalian Protestants, so great was the kindly influence of sitting amongst their own people in Dublin, so irresistible were the softening and kindly influences, that even that Protestant Parliament actually gave way, and would have emancipated the Catholics had it not been for the machinations of Englishmen. We are told to-day that there are two nations in Ireland. I should like to know where the second nation is. I never met a Protestant Ulsterman who did not call himself an Irishman. Let me read a short extract from the reports of two meetings that took place in Ulster last week. Both were called for the purpose of denouncing the Prime Minister. The first was addressed by a man famous in Ulster, who is, I believe, the Grand Master of the Orangemen in Belfast—the Rev. Dr. Kane—and this will give you an idea of the strength of his words. He said—

> "Mr. Morley now thought himself the idol of the Irish nation. Well, he might be induced to take a tour of Ireland, where he was so much esteemed; he might spend his Easter holidays in the most important of the four Provinces of Ireland, and ventilate some of his unwritten articles for the magazines; but if he got away with a whole skin he might talk for the rest of his life without fear of contradiction of the admiration which the Irish nation felt for him."

These are the law and order gentlemen of Ulster. Dr. Kane is the Grand Master of the Orangemen of Belfast, and he threatens to annihilate the Irish Secretary if he dares to cross the Boyne. Then he went on to speak of 1792. He said—

> "He had with him a flag of the time of which he spoke"—

(the speaker held up a silken flag of the Irish Volunteers)—

> a time of which, as an Irish Protestant, he was proud; when Irish Protestants showed that they were true to the soil that nourished them; when they showed that Irish Protestants were Irish patriots, and compelled England to do our country justice. Irish Protestants were patriots by compelling Englishmen with arms in their hands to grant the Constitution of 1792."

Here is a meeting at Dungannon—an anti-Home Rule demonstration—which was attended by Lord Ranfurly and a large number of magistrates, and was presided over by Mr. Stephenson, J.P. What did Mr. Stephenson say? He said—

> "It is only a century since the streets of Dungannon resounded to the tread of the Irish Volunteers. That assembly was called together for the purpose of asserting the rights of Irishmen, and the words they uttered would assist, in no small degree, in producing the desired effect on English statesmen."

Remember that it was a chairman presiding over the "other nation" that uttered those words. The meeting was only held last week; it was presided over by a J.P.; and, after hearing the words uttered at that meeting, will any hon. Member have the audacity to get up and speak of "another nation?" Now, what did these Volunteers do? They resolved—

> "That the claims of any body to make laws for Ireland save the King, Lords, and Commons of the Kingdom is unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance."

It makes one feel almost as if one was in a dream to see the Loyal men of Ulster boasting that their streets are resounding with the tramp of armed men simply because, after long suffering, the people have turned and are content to take a lesson. Strange are the vicissitudes of Irish politics. Indeed, I would not be surprised if the men who are now blocking an Arms Act, for which, up to this, they have always been clamouring—I would be surprised if these men, before the game is played out, yet turned round and denounced us for having sold the rights of the Irish people by accepting this Bill. Sir, we have been told by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), who ought to have known better than make the statement, that he respected the Irish Parliament because it was a Protestant and a landlords' Parliament. That brings me to the question—Did the Irish Parliament wish to remain a Protestant and a landlord Parliament? No, Sir. In the very first year after they asserted their liberty—in the very first year after they passed a Declaration of Rights—the Leaders of the Irish Parliament—the patriots of the day—declared their desire to grant liberty to millions of their Catholic fellow-countrymen. No, Sir; they did not wish to remain a Protestant and a landlord Parliament; but they desired to be a Parliament of a united Irish nation. This induces me to say a word upon the Catholic and Protestant question. Sir, it is a very singular thing that all through the 18th century, although there was a most horrible Code of penal laws against the Catholics, yet there were no riots between Catholics and Protestants until the foundation of the Orange Society, in 1795. There is no more remarkable fact in history than this—that during the whole of that period, while the Catholics were groaning under penal laws, there was not a single collision between Catholics and Protestants. It is a remarkable fact in history that, although the Protestants inflicted the most horrible persecution upon Catholics, so tremendous was the influence of the gentry living amongst the people that, although the title of these men to their properties was founded on the confiscations of 1641 and 1688, still there was no disturbance between the Catholics and Protestants; and gradually the Parliament of Ireland, with no pressure from without, and with very little agitation from within, step by step began to undo the Penal Code, and had they been left alone they would have swept it all away.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): But always at the instance of the English Government.

MR. DILLON: By no means.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): Hear, hear!

MR. DILLON: Most certainly not. If the noble Lord can prove that, I will be very happy to listen to him; but I am perfectly certain that he cannot. I am perfectly ready to admit that the English Government protected the Catholics in the beginning of the century. I hope the noble Lord will listen to this, because it affords a convincing proof to the contrary of what the noble Lord has stated. In the Irish Parliament, under the influence of Irish patriotism, the Protestants of Ulster, and the Protestant landlords of Ulster, who assembled at Dungannon, in a series of resolutions passed by them, declared—

> "That we hold the right of private judgment in the matter of religion to be equally sacred in others as well as in ourselves; therefore, as men, as Irishmen, and as Christians we rejoice in the relaxation of the laws against Roman Catholics."

Almost before any of the disabilities were removed from the Roman Catholics, after the Declaration of Rights, a second Bill was brought forward to restore some of the rights of the Catholics; and in the course of that debate Grattan made one of the noblest of the many noble speeches he delivered on behalf of the Irish Catholics. Nobody can doubt that if it had been left to Grattan, before long the Irish Catholics would have been sitting side by side with their Protestant fellow-countrymen. He said—

> "The question now is whether you are content to remain a Protestant Settlement or become an Irish nation? So long as the Penal Code remains we can never be a great nation. The Penal Code is the shell in which the Parliament has been hatched; now it must burst the shell, or we must perish in it."

Grattan declared that as the question was whether they were to be a Protestant Settlement or an Irish nation he was in favour of making Ireland a great nation; but the English Government thought they could best rule Ireland by keeping it as a Protestant Settlement, and that is what it has been ever since the Union. They to-day are declaring for a Protestant Settlement in Ireland, backed up by the bayonets of the military, which England may send over to protect them; whereas their Nationalist fellow-countrymen are inviting them to go and form a part of the Irish nation, where, if they accept the invitation, they would occupy—[*A laugh.*]—hon. Members above the Gangway may laugh at the statement, but I say it and mean it —they would occupy a far more honourable position than they occupy now. I have often heard persons speak disparagingly of the dignity of being a Member of the House of Commons that is to be, and I believe will be. The principle I hold is this—that no man ought to be ashamed of serving his own country first. This is, I freely admit, a great and a proud Parliament, and it takes a great part in the affairs of the world. The Irish Parliament will be a small Parliament, and will not aspire to take such a part. It will be content to occupy a much humbler sphere. Does this House suppose that any one of us who has lived in Ireland, or been brought up there, can ever reconcile himself to stay in this Parliament to take a share in the affairs of all the world, when the affairs of his own country, which gave him birth, and in which he has spent the best part of his life, are going to rack and ruin? It may be that the time may come when the Irish Members may very properly desire to take part in Imperial affairs; but that must be when they have, first of all, succeeded, or tried to succeed, in raising their own country from the position of reproach in which she now stands. I want now to say a word on the question of the alleged want of prosperity of Ireland under the Irish Parliament, and of the improvement which has been brought about through the Union. That statement has been falsely made in this House more than once. I do not wish to trouble the House with many statistics; but there are a few figures which I will quote which I believe to be of importance. The first point which will strike those who examine the subject is that which relates to the population. In 1706 the population of Ireland was 1,500,000, and at the end of the century in 1796 it was 4,500,000, so that it had increased threefold. The population of Ireland is now exactly what it was at the end of last century. The population of England, since the end of the last century, has increased threefold, while the Irish population has remained exactly as it was. But take the capitals of the two countries as a comparison; and I do not think, in a rough and general way, I could give a more striking example of the condition of the respective countries and their relative prosperity. In 1688 the population of Dublin was 64,000, while in 1798 it was 185,000, so that it had increased threefold. In 1881 the population of Dublin was 249,000, showing that since the Union it had only increased 10 per cent. Thus, during the century of the unhappy Irish Parliament, the population of Dublin trebled. It is most remarkable to see that, during the first of these periods, the population of London only increased from 550,000 to 864,000. On the other hand, during the 18th century, the population of London has increased fourfold, while the population of Dublin has only increased 10 per cent. This increase, I am bound to say, is a very poor one, and does not look like an increase of prosperity during the Union. [Major SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): What about Belfast?] Belfast, I am bound to say, has increased, and I am proud of it. But I would point out to the hon. and gallant Gentleman that it is a hard thing to say that every other town in Ireland shall be forced to decrease and go down to beggary for the simple reason that Belfast has prospered. The hon. and gallant Member has mentioned Belfast. Do not let him suppose for one moment that I have the least animosity against Belfast. I am proud of the increase of Belfast, and I hope it will continue. Take the one great trade of Belfast—the linen trade. We know they talk about danger to the linen trade under an Irish Parliament. To suppose that any danger would arise to the linen trade from an Irish Parliament, or to suppose that we would interfere with the linen trade, is the old story of supposing that we are all idiots. In regard to the linen trade, let me point out what its course was under an Irish Parliament. In 1706 the exports of Irish linen were worth £23,750, while in 1796, after 90 years of an Irish Parliament——

MR. EDWARD CLARKE (Plymouth): No; not 90.

MR. DILLON: Yes; 90 years. Was there no Irish Parliament in 1706?

MR. EDWARD CLARKE: No; certainly not.

MR. DILLON: May I advise the hon. and learned Gentleman, before he makes again such strange assertions, to make a more profound study of Irish history? I was saying that in 1706 our exports of Irish linen amounted to £23,750; whereas in 1796, after 90 years of an Irish Parliament, they were £3,113,789. In that same period another striking fact is that, while the linen trade of Scotland only increased in the proportion of 1 to 23, that of Ireland increased in the proportion of 1 to 88. In considering the comparative prosperity of England and Scotland to-day, you must bear in mind that during the last century in Ireland every branch of trade has advanced much more rapidly than in Scotland. That was under the Irish Parliament, and it is not a bad result to show for the Irish linen trade. Yet hon. Members who make such a profound study of Irish history come to this House and declare, over and over again, that Irish manufactures and trade have decreased and withered away under the Irish Parliament. Do they know more than the traders and bankers of Dublin in 1798? Lord Plunket, whose name is more honoured in Irish history than that of his descendant is ever likely to be, declared, speaking of the Irish Parliament, that—

> "Laws were well arranged and administered, and the Constitution well established. Her revenues and trades were thriving, and she afforded a happy example of prosperity more rapid than existed in any other country."

Listen also to these words, and recollect that they were spoken by an Irishman in a debate in the Irish Parliament. Lord Plunket went on to say that—

> "There was no complaint of any deficiency in any of those respects, but that Ireland enjoyed and acknowledged her own prosperity."

Can anyone use like language of the period since the Union? Turn to the pages of *Hansard* for any single year, and you will find every page defaced by inquiries into the relief of the poor in Ireland. Can it be wondered at that we look back with longing to the days when Ireland enjoyed and acknowledged her prosperity, and that we should desire to try the experiment again of an Irish Parliament under similar conditions? If you are not content with the evidence of Lord Plunket, take that of Lord Clare, the favourite authority on this side of the House. In 1798 he stated that there was no nation on the habitable globe which had advanced in cultivation, commerce, agriculture, and manufactures as Ireland had during the period from 1792 to 1800. What did Secretary Cooke, who published a pamphlet in 1799, say? He said—

> "It is universally admitted that no other country ever made such a rapid advance as Ireland in population, in agriculture, in wealth, and in commerce."

After these extracts, will any hon. Member say that Ireland did not advance in prosperity under the Irish Parliament? I think I have proved my case beyond all contradiction. When we turn to the other side of the picture, and consider what has been the course of commerce, of population, of trade, of agriculture, and of wealth in Ireland, who can stand up and say that there has been any real progress? We have been accustomed to hear successive Lords Lieutenant since the Union speak of the improvement in her agriculture, trade, and produce, and the increase in her exports and imports; but an inquiry into the exports and imports of the country only tells a tale of ruin not to be paralleled, because the exports consisted wholly of food, with the exception of linen in the North, which was the one bright spot. Ireland exported a great deal more than she imported. Just one word more in connection with trade, and it is in reference to the cotton manufactures of Ireland. Probably many Members are not aware that Ireland ever had cotton manufactures. That trade flourished from 1760 to the time of the Union, and in 1800 there were 20,000 operatives employed — 10,000 in Ulster, and 10,000 in the other Provinces of Ireland. No less than 200,000 yards of cotton cloth were made every week, and not less than from 100,000 to 200,000 persons were supported thereby. The manufacture was encouraged by Lord de Vesci, Sir John Parnell, and other men whose names are illustrious in Irish history. There is only one other subject—the protection of the Loyal minority. Over and over again we have heard appeals to the House and the country for protection to the Loyal minority. It almost seems to me a worse condemnation than any other circumstance. Were ever such appeals heard when there was an Irish Parliament? How is it that this minority have made themselves so obnoxious to their fellow-countrymen? When there was an Irish Parliament, did they ever appeal to you for protection? During the whole of the 18th century you had an Irish Parliament; but did you ever hear anything of the disintegration of the Empire? Did not the century pass over without a rebellion of any kind? There was no rebellion between 1790 and 1798; no rising against English rule; and the Loyal minority never had to appeal to you for aid. What has been the result of the Union? To-day you have the Tories, to whom you gave the government of the country, piteously appealing to you for protection against their Catholic fellow-countrymen. In 1782, when the Volunteers were enrolled in Ireland, it is notorious that, although the Catholics were forbidden to carry arms, the Protestant landlords armed their Catholic tenants, because, although they were the "Loyal minority," they still were not afraid of the people they lived amongst. What have you done since with your system of Union in Ireland? Why, Sir, I make bold to say that there are not upon the face of the earth any body of men in a more humiliated and a more disgraceful position than the Irish landlords to-day. They tell you they have ruled Ireland for 86 years; but the result of their rule is that they are afraid of their own people over whom they rule—afraid to trust themselves in that country without having a great army at their back. The way in which that has been brought about is very easy to understand by anybody who has read the history of this century. The absenteeism of the landlords, and the miserable government in Ireland which they have been compelled to uphold, have swept away all the popularity which they used to enjoy with their own people. Lord Cloncurry, one of the most intelligent men of his class, has said, in a book full of admirable information about Irish affairs, and which he wrote in 1806, that class hatred was growing up in Ireland, and, he added, that it would end in disastrous consequences if the Union were not repealed, and the landlords did not come back to live amongst their own people. They talk about peace and prosperity in Ireland from a continuance of this system of government, and of the great danger which will result from setting up an Irish Parliament. They seem to forget what occurred at the time of the Union. Have they ever read the speeches of Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Pitt, who said, in bringing in the Act, that if the Union were carried peace and prosperity would ensue? Who would go so far as to say that their prophecies have been realized? It would have been an extraordinary thing if they could have been realized, seeing that this Parliament, since the Union, has had to pass no less than 86 Coercion Acts. What I say now is this. Hon. Gentlemen who seek to defeat this Bill, and who prophesy evils as likely to result from it, either insist upon shutting their eyes to the future, in the event of its not being passed, or they indulge in the same optimistic prophecy as was indulged in by Pitt and Lord Castlereagh, and which the experience of 86 years has completely falsified. I would now appeal to hon. Gentlemen who are friendly to the principle of this Bill not to do two things. I would appeal to them not to wreck the Bill on account of some detail, and not to take all the frightful responsibility that they would incur by so wrecking it. It is true that there is a truce of God in Ireland at the present time; but how long will it last? It is true that the tone and temper of this House are different now from what they used to be four or five years ago; but how long will that condition of things last? I would further urge upon hon. Members who talk about delay as if they desire time in which to arrange their differences to remember that there is a "tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune," and that, if they do not take advantage of this truce of God in Ireland, and this truce of God in the House, it is impossible for the wisest man to say that they may not find themselves next year in the middle of a Coercion Act instead of a Government of Ireland Bill.

MR. LEATHAM (Huddersfield): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. Dillon) has treated this question as an Irish question only. I desire to treat it chiefly as an English question, and an English question of the first magnitude. I do not, therefore, propose to reply in detail to the arguments of the hon. Member for East Mayo, although I shall make an incidental reference to them. The House has listened with especial interest to the speeches of noble Lords and right hon. Gentlemen who have themselves made great sacrifices in their resistance to the principle of this Bill. I think it ought also to listen to those who, although they occupy much humbler positions in the House, are equally ready to make what may appear to them to be almost equal sacrifices in defence of the same views. There are some of us who have long had the honour of a seat in this House who are well aware that by the speeches which we are about to make, and the votes which we are about to give, we shall, in all probability, insure our own exclusion from Parliament—not because we are unable to carry with us the bulk of the Party in the constituencies, but because our majorities are not such as to allow of any serious difference of opinion, any split, any lukewarmness on the part of those whom we have the honour of regarding as our supporters. I think that this consideration should add some little weight to what we say; because the man who is speaking in the teeth of his own personal interest is, to my mind, always better worth listening to, even though he be a poor rhetorician, than the man who waxes ever so eloquent in defence of opinions, the successful advocacy of which will secure his return to this House, or a continuance of his occupancy of that Bench. And it is just because the principles which are involved in the rejection of this Bill are of such infinitely greater importance, not only than any personal triumph, but even than the triumph of the great Minister whom we have been so proud to follow, and even than the triumph of the great Party to which we are so proud to belong, that we must throw to the winds, if need be, not only all personal considerations—that is a trifle—but what I find it much harder to renounce—an allegiance to the right hon. Gentleman of 27 years' duration in this House, and a devotion to Party interests which has lasted all my life. Nor is the wrench any less painful when we reflect that, by the exercise of the ordinary prudence which has hitherto marked the relations between the Liberal Party and its Chiefs, much, if not all, this mischief and havoc might have been avoided. I never remember the time when a great measure of Party policy has been launched before, without the Party having first been taken into confidence. Ministers have always felt their way. Their policy has been much more an emanation from the Party than an inspiration of their own. It has been the province of Ministers, no doubt, to shape and formulate the policy of the Party, to give it point and cohesion, and to carry it to a successful issue; but it has been the province of the Party to conceive the policy itself. It has been through this tacit arrangement that the Liberal Party has been able to combine great force in action with great independence of individual opinion; and without independence of individual opinion I venture to think that the Liberal Party is doomed. Now, if this had been the course followed upon this occasion, we should, at all events, have escaped this catastrophe; we should not have had to witness the spectacle of all the great Leaders in whom we have trusted, every man with his sword against his fellow, and beating down one another in full view of the common enemy, just like the Philistines of old. And now I am going to say a strong thing: if it be too strong, I must ask the House to forgive me, and the right hon. Gentleman to forgive me. It is this—that if the worst enemy of the Liberal Party had set himself to devise a scheme for the disintegration and disruption of that Party, he could hardly have hit upon anything so formidable or so fatal as the Bill which the right hon. Gentleman, in the plenitude of his experience and the maturity of his wisdom, has flung like an apple of discord in our midst. For the Bill before the House seems to me to affront, one after another, almost every great principle to which the Liberal Party has been attached. For example, upon what principle has the Party laid so much stress as upon this—that it is the right and duty of every intelligent and independent man to take part through his Representative in the government of the whole; to make himself a party to the laws which he obeys, to the policy towards which he contributes, to the taxation which he shares, and to bear upon his own shoulders his full responsibility as an elector to the Imperial Parliament—a responsibility which is so great and sacred a thing that the man who dares to tamper with it, or to interfere with its free exercise, is visited by penalties almost as great as those which hedge in property and life? This great principle of the Liberal Party—that every capable citizen should take part in the government of the whole—has only just received its final recognition. The Parliament which is now sitting is the monument of that recognition; and yet the ink is scarcely dry upon the Reform Act before we are asked to undo what we have done, to strike off at a blow many thousands of our fellow-electors from the Imperial Register, to divorce taxation from representation, and to deprive every Irishman in Ireland of his just share in the making of Imperial laws and the consideration of Imperial policy. Nay, to such lengths is this "fad" of seclusion carried, that even in war time, when the resources of the Empire may be taxed to the utmost, and when hostile Fleets will infest the Irish Coasts, the defence of Ireland is to be taken out of Irish hands and to be removed from Irish pockets, and the whole contribution of Ireland to the war fund is to be limited to the stereotyped Estimates of peace. Is this your recipe for infusing a common loyalty and a common patriotism, for knitting together the hearts of two peoples, for teaching the lesson that whatever may be the differences of race and creed, in times of peril and perplexity this is nothing compared with the vital obligation to share the same tasks, the same burdens, the same sacrifices in defence of the same country? Once admit that Irishmen are our fellow-countrymen and our fellow-citizens, and by what chicane of casuistry can you deprive them of precisely those rights and privileges which are the most significant of political equality, and the enjoyment of which is absolutely essential if we are to regard one another as fellow-citizens and fellow-countrymen at all? I know that the right hon. Gentleman, in his speech the other night, professed his willingness to consider a number of proposals, which I am quite sure were not his own—gimcrack proposals under which Irish Members are to sneak back into the House on certain very special occasions. I have heard the gloss of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) on the text of the right hon. Gentleman, and I do not find the gloss of my right hon. Friend a whit more intelligible than the original text. What we desire is, that the Irish Members shall never leave this House; that they shall be here in undiminished numbers on terms of absolute equality with ourselves; and unless this is conceded we maintain that this Bill will go to its second reading in violent discord with the great principles of English government. But the hon. Member for East Mayo tells us that it is absurd for us to protest against an arrangement which Irish Members regard as satisfactory. Sir, I think that the way in which Irish Members have received this Bill proves that it ought not to pass. Depend upon it, no Irishman has accepted the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman in the sense of the right hon. Gentleman. The hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) accepts it; but does he accept it as a final settlement of Irish claims? [*Cries of* "Yes!"] Then I failed to understand the speech of the hon. Member for the City of Cork. Does he accept it as that which is to cement still more closely the union between England and Ireland? Or does he accept it as an impregnable platform from which to prosecute a future, a fruitful, and perhaps a final agitation? The hon. Member for the City of Cork has never made a secret of his ambition—whether it be in Ireland or in America that he has raised his powerful voice, he has told us that his ambition was to make Ireland a nation. He has told us, further, that the journey to that end is comprised in three stages. What marks the first stage? What the hon. Gentleman calls the emigration of the landlords. What marks the second stage? The election of a Parliament in Dublin. What marks the third stage? "The severance of the last link," and the declaration of Irish Independence. With a hop, a skip, and a jump the hon. Gentleman, in anticipation, traverses the whole space. The right hon. Gentleman takes the hop and the skip along with the hon. Member for the City of Cork. When they are taken, shall we see an end of the alliance of the hon. Member and the right hon. Gentleman, or shall we see them still standing hand in hand contemplating the last spring, and perhaps concocting, with juvenile emulation, the last jump? Sir, I refuse to go two-thirds of the way with the hon. Member and the right hon. Gentleman. I spoke a moment ago of the Liberal principles to which this Bill is an affront. Another of these which the Bill practically offends is that every man must be protected, not only in the exercise of his public liberties, but also of those individual liberties upon which public liberty is founded—the privilege of doing what is right in his own eyes, so long as he keeps within the law, however small may be the minority in which he finds himself, however unpopular may be his opinions, however complete the isolation of the individual may be. This is what we call liberty. It is the highest product of political civilization. It is the rare and splendid treasure of communities in which the law is absolutely just as between man and man, and in which the law is absolutely supreme. Such communities are entitled to autonomy. But a community in which a system of terrorism has usurped the place of law is not entitled to antonomy. To give it complete autonomy is to perpetuate the trampling under foot of individual liberty. This cannot exist in communities in which faction reigns, in which religious intolerance has got the upper hand, in which the memory of past injustice is allowed to become a potent factor in legislation. In such communities as that, you must have a law which is absolutely just as between man and man; but which is above all Parties, all factions, and all creeds, with which none of them can tamper, and before which all of them must quail. Just such a law it has been our endeavour to set up in Ireland. It will be the proudest distinction which will surround the name of the right hon. Gentleman hereafter that he laboured hard and long to set up such a law. He was on the high road to success. A little more courage, a little more firmness, a little more faith in his own great measures, a little more determination to stamp out every combination against individual liberty, and Ireland might have become a country in which the law reigned, and in which it had been made absolutely just as between man and man. Unfortunately, the right hon. Gentleman has preferred to bring in a Bill which will give faction its fling, which will give an intolerant priesthood the upper hand, and which will place the minority under the heel of a majority who have everything to avenge, and whose proceedings of late only lend too much colour to the belief that they will avenge everything. This Bill is so notoriously the shipwreck of certain great classes in Ireland that it has been found necessary to introduce another Bill, in order to provide those classes with boats in which to escape; but, as in the case of other shipwrecks of which I have read, the boats ostentatiously provided are far too small to carry off the passengers and crew. When the right hon. Gentleman brought in the twin measure—and these measures are not only twins, but Siamese twins—you cannot destroy the one without killing the other—he gave as one reason for doing so, that it was not fair to throw the task of dealing with the Land Question upon the infant Legislature in Dublin. Was that all? Did not the right hon. Gentleman know that the infant Legislature in Dublin was not to be trusted to deal with the Land Question? And did he not know that without that other Bill the people of this country would never consent to hand over their Protestant fellow-countrymen, and all they possessed, to the tender mercies of the men who would then rule Ireland? The existence of the twin Bill stamps injustice and unfairness all over the Bill which is now before the House; and the treasure of the country is to be poured forth like water, lest the saviours of Ireland in Parliament assembled should make short work of £200,000,000 of British property on the other side of the Channel. Now, Radicals pride themselves upon being, in an especial manner, the guardians of the public purse. We make many speeches and take many divisions in order to save a few thousands here and there to the people. With what face can we go down to them and ask them to embark upon an expenditure of public money, the very first instalment of which will load the National Debt with an incubus as great as the whole incubus of the Russian War?

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I rise to Order. I wish to ask you, Sir, whether the hon. Gentleman is justified in discussing on the Government of Ireland Bill the Land Purchase Scheme?

Mr. SPEAKER: It will not be in Order to go into the details of a measure not now immediately before the House; but a casual reference to it would be in Order.

Mr. LEATHAM: Well, Sir, I will respect the sensitiveness of the hon. Gentleman, and pass away from the subject. The Secretary of State for War has told us that we must be prepared with an alternative scheme if we succeeded in rejecting the measures of the Government. But how has the necessity arisen? It certainly has not arisen because 86 Home Rule Members have been returned to Parliament, for everybody knew that after the Reform Act had come into force some 80 or 90 Home Rulers would be returned. The right hon. Gentleman courted the return of these 86 Home Rulers; but he entirely omitted to tell us that the granting of an extended franchise to Ireland was tantamount to the granting of Home Rule. Whence, then, springs the necessity for this proposal? Is it possible that it has arisen out of what are supposed to be the Parliamentary exigencies of the Party? Remember it was not until the elections were very far advanced, it was not until it was clear that the hon. Member for the City of Cork would hold the balance between the two great Parties in the State, and could give the victory to whomsoever he would, that the country heard a word about the concession of Home Rule. The first whisper came delicately and tremblingly, as though it were ashamed to be heard. It was gainsaid, contradicted, and denied. Then it was re-affirmed and not denied. I mean the whisper that we were to have another Treaty of Kilmainham, but that this time the right hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member had changed places; that it was not the hon. Member for the City of Cork who was the prisoner of the right hon. Gentleman, but the right hon. Gentleman who was the prisoner of the hon. Member for the City of Cork—yes, Sir; that the greatest Parliamentary general of modern times had gone to surrender himself and his whole army to the Irish camp. It has been my good fortune to watch for many years the skill of the right hon. Gentleman as a great Party Leader. I have admired, as few have admired, his matchless eloquence and his boundless ingenuity—the play of his keen and subtle genius over every question which came within his reach; the grasp—I had almost said the grip—which the possession of these great gifts has given him over the minds, and even the consciences, of millions of his fellow-subjects; but the thing which I have envied more than anything else, afar off, is the sovereign faculty which the right hon. Gentleman possesses, in his own mind and conscience, and with perfect candour and honesty, of clothing Parliamentary expediency with all the splendid attributes of right. The right hon. Gentleman has trumped the Conservative card, but he has trumped it with a card which cannot be recalled without misery and mischief. This is why we are told that we must be ready with an alternative proposal. Now we did not create the situation, and I do not know that we are bound to find an issue out of it; but if we do, I can tell the right hon. Gentleman that it shall not be an issue of cowardice and panic. It so happens that we are ready with an alternative. It is a very simple one, and requires no extraordinary exercise of virtue. It is that we should dare to be men. The hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) threatens us with Irish obstruction if this Bill is thrown out. We know the worst of Irish obstruction. If obstruction be a crime, where is the Party in this House which is without this sin? If obstruction be a crime, and it be only the guiltless who are to throw the first stone, and all the rest retire, I think that we should have something very like an adjournment of the whole House, and the right hon. Gentleman would be left standing alone with the hon. Member for the City of Cork. But I should like very much to know what great measure of progress Irish Members have obstructed? Where is the blank which they have left in the Statute Book? There are some people who think that failure is written upon everything because the reforming energy of generations cannot be compressed into a single lifetime, and because when we have done our best we must still leave a future and a *raison d'être* before the Liberal Party. Now, I have been a Reformer all my life; some of my hon. Friends who are sitting opposite me have sometimes called me an ardent Reformer; but, ardent Reformer though I am, I had rather that every reform should be hung up for the remainder of my lifetime than that we should establish by this Bill an abuse and a grievance upon which the reforming zeal of a generation may expend itself in vain. But the hon. Member for Mayo tells us that if these Bills do not pass we have no alternative but coercion. What does he mean by coercion? It is not coercion to make a man pay his just debts, or keep his hands off his neighbour. That is not coercion. That is government; and it is because this House has shrunk from governing Ireland, as it has never shrunk from governing England and Scotland; because it has shrunk from the duty of making the law respected, making the Queen's writ run everywhere, making life and property safe—yes, at the cost, if need be, of any exercise of force—it is because this House has shrunk from the duty of governing Ireland that we are confronted by the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman. First show that you can rule, and then come down to the House with any number of Bills you please. But the mischief is that the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman, if passed, will not supersede coercion. The meaning of this Bill is that the Government have made their choice between two coercions, and that the coercion which they have chosen is not the coercion of those who defy the law—not the coercion of those who maim and murder by moonlight, but the coercion of those whose only fault is that they are, perhaps, too blindly attached to the laws and liberties and Constitution of their country. My right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary spoke rather lightly the other day about the Arms Bill, and its possible application to the Loyalists of Ulster.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I never said a word about Loyalists or about Ulster.

MR. LEATHAM: I should be very sorry to misrepresent my right hon. Friend, but I am in the recollection of the House. The remarks of the right hon. Gentleman were made in answer to a Question. I certainly understood the right hon. Gentleman to refer to the North of Ireland.

MR. JOHN MORLEY: I said the North of Ireland and elsewhere.

MR. LEATHAM: The North of Ireland and elsewhere. It is because the right hon. Gentleman called special attention to the North of Ireland that I ventured to make the observation; and I venture to tell the right hon. Gentleman that the first shot which is fired by the Government with bloodshed against the Loyalists of Ulster will be echoed by an explosion of public opinion over here which will sweep my right hon. Friend and all his Colleagues from that Bench. Sir, I think I know pretty well the feeling of the masses in the great counties of Lancashire and Yorkshire. I think it a happy thing, with the news which we have had from time to time from Ireland, that that feeling has hitherto been restrained. I can imagine news from Ireland which would set that feeling free. I can imagine news from Ireland which would be followed by excesses which we should all deplore, but which none of us could prevent. Now, Sir, we have all read history, and we all know that there is hardly a great nation which has ever existed which has not had to pass, once and again, perhaps, through a crisis which historians are fond of calling the crisis of its fate. What they mean is that upon the way in which that nation has passed through that crisis has depended its future place among the nations of the earth. The great nation upon the other side of the Atlantic, which is bone of our bone, and whose experience and example for a single hour more nearly concern us than everything which ever happened in Austria and Hungary —than anything which ever could happen in Norway and Sweden—that great nation, within the memory of all of us, saw just such a crisis approaching and passed through it. They did not meet it by bringing in a Bill for the erection of a separate Congress in the Confederate States. They met it by proclaiming upon a hundred battlefields that the law must be upheld. The forces which are arrayed against the unity of the United Kingdom are paltry compared with those which threatened the unity of the United States. For very shame, if from no nobler motive, let us, too, take our stand upon the Union, and say, that for us there can only be one England, one Law, one Parliament, and one Throne.

Mr. COLERIDGE (Sheffield, Attercliffe): Sir, with great hesitation I rise at this hour for the first time to address the House. But I think it is high time that someone who sits below the Gangway should assert that he is ready to put in practice those principles in which he professes to believe. There have been too many wandering sheep, and I think there should come from this quarter of the House, at any rate, a short and decisive expression of hearty concurrence with the Bill now before us. Sir, we have been led astray in various ways throughout the debate; but I think we are here met to decide one thing, and one thing only, and that is whether Ireland should be governed as we think she ought to be governed, or whether Ireland should be governed as she thinks she ought to be governed. I venture to think that the only principle that we are met to-night to assert is the one broad principle that Ireland should have an Irish Parliament elected by the Irish people for the purpose of managing Irish affairs. Sir, we have been met to-night by two main arguments. The first argument is that we are destroying the unity of the Empire; the second argument is that the Irish people are not fit to govern themselves. With regard to destroying the unity of the Empire, the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale, who opposes this Bill, states his objection in these words—that he was afraid we might have "different laws administered in a different spirit and on different principles." Sir, when I look around the United Kingdom I see that we have laws founded upon different principles, and I venture to think administered in a different spirit. I call attention to the fact that in this Bill we have but one Monarchy, one Army, and one Navy, one National Debt to which Ireland contributes her share, and fiscal unity for postage and other purposes. You can hardly say that that means disintegration of the Empire. To confound union with law, and unity with the principles on which law is administered, constitutes no argument against this measure. We find the law of landlord and tenant administered upon an entirely different principle in Ireland and in England and Scotland. And when it is desired to assimilate the *status* of the Scotch tenant to that of the Irish tenant, I point out that hon. Members above the Gangway opposite who talk so loudly of unity of law and Empire have used every effort at their command to prevent those aspirations being realized. What can be more essential in principle than the connection between Church and State? According to this majestic theory of unity of law, I say that for appearance sake hon. Members opposite should support a scheme for the liberation of religion from State patronage and control in England, Scotland, and Wales. Again, the Marriage Law is entirely different in England and in Scotland; there are crimes in Scotland which are not crimes in England; and there are customs even in some of the English counties which have the force of law, but which have no such force in other counties. No, Sir; laws of countries should be the product of the circumstances, characteristics, and the habits of the people who live in them, and no laws which have not that indigenous quality will be guarded or respected. Something has been said to-night about Irish history, and with regard to the law being administered in a different spirit in England and Ireland. I would ask whether, under the most close Executive Union between the two countries, it has not been administered in a totally different spirit? Before Grattan's Parliament the Legislative Union was absent; but the spirit of the English Executive penetrated to the furthest quarters of the country, and in those times we enacted penal laws which we should have been ashamed to transfer to this country. Grattan said—

> "That the way of safety lay in making the people feel that they were not oppressed in the interests of Protestants and landlords. This the statesmen of that day would not do."

In fact, the danger lay in trying to force upon Catholics of Ireland the ascendancy of England by force, fraud, and corruption. Unity of Empire is, no doubt, a high-sounding phrase; but I ask hon. Gentlemen who talk so much about it to consider one point. Year by year thousands of Irishmen are quitting the shores of Ireland and settling in our Colonies, carrying with them hatred of the country which they think has driven them forth. What would be the effect upon Irish Colonial feeling if the aspirations of Ireland for self-government were now to be disappointed? With regard to the argument that the Irish people are not fit to govern themselves, that has been sufficiently disposed of by the hon. Member who spoke below the Gangway, the hon. Member for Mayo (Mr. Dillon), who told us that the Irish Members, even if they were Loyalists, were not fools, and that in a matter on which the safety and welfare of their country depended we might rely that the choice of the Irish people would be for the good of the Irish nation. No, Sir; all these fears about the maintenance of law and order are simply the fear of the landlords that rents will go down in Ireland. Go down they must. So long as rents bear no proportion to prices, and so long as landlords think it to their interests to reduce the number of their tenants, so long, apart from the question of Union, must the cup of agrarian bitterness in Ireland be filled to overflowing. To come to first principles, what makes a nation? Its capacity for self-government. The exercise of self-government demands those very qualities which self-government produces; those duties which responsibility involves are the very duties which experience of responsibility dictates. I do not doubt that once you give Ireland the legitimate control of her own affairs, and allow her to choose her own rulers, that those rulers will be the salt of the Irish race. You must consider this one point—that it is with these rulers under the Bill that the British Government will in future have to deal. And, I ask, is it credulous to suppose that they will wish to maintain the benefits of this legislation? Do you suppose that they will abandon all the benefits which have been conferred upon them? No, Sir; I venture to think that we need have no fear of that. Some of our opponents seem to me to undertake a very great responsibility in resisting this measure. There is an argument used by some who say that Irish Members should come here in their full proportion; but my view is that, unless we have control over Irish affairs, I do not see why they should have any control over ours. The second argument is simply a *non possumus.* This is a just and generous boon to the Irish people—it is a boon offered to the Irish Democracy by the Democracy of England. But if this contest should be prolonged, if it should be embittered, if our debate here should degenerate from argument to disputation, and from disputation to strife, if the contest should be fruitless, and the measure be postponed, brought in again, proposed and discussed with increasing bitterness, and finally demanded with menace, and yielded with despair and without grace, both nations will feel for long the consequences of such obstinacy and such folly.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Sir R. Assheton Cross.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *Monday* next.

CUSTOMS AND INLAND REVENUE BILL.—[BILL 190.]

(*Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

COMMITTEE.

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

MR. GREGORY (Sussex, East Grinstead): I have a series of clauses upon the Paper, which may possibly be not altogether regarded as germane to this Bill. Nevertheless, I believe that my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury will be willing to give effect to them, if not in their present shape, and in the Bill now before the Committee, perhaps in another form which carries out the intention of my Amendment, and in another Bill. I hope, if that Bill is brought in, that I shall have an opportunity of moving the Amendment to carry out the object I have in view; and I am, for the present, willing to withdraw the clauses standing in my name upon that understanding. Of course, in withdrawing this Amendment I run some risk, because it may be contingent to the present situation that the Government may not continue in Office, or that Parliament may undergo a process of Dissolution, in which case, having arrived at an age which will probably determine my Parliamentary career, I may be deprived of the power of moving these clauses myself. I trust, however, that my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury would, under those circumstances, supply my place, and undertake to give effect to them, as far as he is able. At all events, I am willing to leave the matter in his hands to carry out my object, if possible, during the present Session, but relying on his assistance, as I have said, to give effect to them in the event of a Dissolution.

New Clauses:—

(Purchasers and mortgagees exempted from liability to succession duty after a specified period.)

"(i.) Notwithstanding the forty-second section of 'The Succession Duty Act, 1853,' or any other provision contained in that Act, real property, or any estate or interest therein, shall not, as against a purchaser for valuable consideration, or a mortgagee, remain charged with or liable to payment of any sum for succession duty after the expiration of six years from the date of the death, upon the happening of which the duty may (whether before or after the passing of this Act) have become payable; or if such period of six years expires within two years from the date of the passing of this Act, then after the expiration of two years from the last-mentioned date.

"(ii.) The duty (if any) unpaid at the expiration of such period of six years or two years, as the case may be, shall be payable and paid by the successor personally, and shall become charged substitutively upon any other estate or interest liable to the same duty and remaining vested in the successor, and in case of a mortgage upon the equity of redemption.

"(iii.) This section is not to lessen or affect any liability of any successor to payment of duty, whether out of money received on any sale or mortgage, or otherwise, but a purchaser or mortgagee shall not, for the purpose of obtaining the exemption conferred by this section, be bound to see that the duty is discharged out of the money or other consideration paid or given as the consideration for the sale or mortgage.

(Power to deposit with Inland Revenue copies of documents not admitted to probate, and thereupon liability for duty after specified period to cease.)

"(i.) Any person may cause a copy of any document which creates a liability for payment of any duty other than a testamentary document admitted to probate to be deposited at the office of Inland Revenue, and such copy shall be received at that office.

"(ii.) The officer receiving under this section a copy of a document shall, on request of the person making the deposit, and either by indorsement on the original document or otherwise, give a receipt in writing under his hand for the document deposited.

"(iii.) After a receipt has been given by an officer of Inland Revenue for a copy deposited as authorised by this section, of a document, no person shall, in the character of trustee, executor, or administrator, be liable for payment of any duty under such document after the expiration of six years next following the date of the deposit, or the date of the death by which the duty becomes payable, whichever date last happens.

"(iv.) After a receipt has been given by an officer of Inland Revenue for a copy, deposited as authorised by this section, of any document, no person shall be liable for payment of any duty thereunder after the expiration of twelve years next following the date of the deposit, or the date of the death by which the duty becomes payable, whichever date last happens.

"(v.) The costs of depositing a copy of a document and obtaining a receipt under this section shall be deemed costs duly incurred by a trustee, executor, or administrator, or any other person in the execution of his duties as trustee, executor, or administrator, or otherwise under the document.

(Liability to duty under documents admitted to probate to cease after a specified period.)

"(i.) No person shall, under a testamentary document admitted to probate, or under letters of administration, be liable in the character of trustee, executor, or administrator, for payment of any duty after the expiration of six years from the date of the duty first becoming payable.

"(ii.) No person shall, under a testamentary document admitted to probate, or under letters of administration, be liable for payment of any duty after the expiration of twelve years from the date of the duty first becoming payable.

"(iii.) Provided, That, where, in the case of a testamentary document or letters of administration coming into operation before the passing of this Act, the period of six years or twelve years mentioned in this section expires within three years next after the date of the passing of this Act, then the exemption from liability conferred by this section shall not take effect till after the expiration of such three years.

(Officer of Inland Revenue may apply for information as to duty.)

"(i.) Any officer of Inland Revenue may apply to any trustee under a document deposited pursuant to this Act, or to any trustee or executor, under a testamentary document which has admitted to probate, or to any administrator, or to any other person actually or presumably liable for payment of duty under such document or under an intestacy, for such information as may be necessary to show whether any duty is payable thereunder.

"(ii.) The person so applied to shall, to the best of his information and belief, give to the officer making application all information reasonably necessary to show whether any duty is payable.

"(iii.) In case any person so applied to for information makes default in giving the same for two calendar months, notice may be given to him requiring payment of duty as on the happening of any event which would create a liability to duty; and in case the person so applied to should not give satisfactory proof that the event has not happened, such event shall be deemed to have happened, and the duty may be recovered accordingly, and as if it had happened; and, in case satisfactory proof is given that the event has not happened, further proceedings for recovery of duty shall be stayed, but all costs and expenses previously incurred of any proceedings taken for recovery of the duty shall be paid to the Receiver of Inland Revenue by the person making default.

"(iv.) Provided, That, any trustee who has retired or been duly discharged from a trust, shall not, under this section, become subjected to any further or other liability as to payment of duty, giving information, or otherwise, than he would have been subject to if this Act had not been passed.

"(v.) All costs, charges, and expenses incurred by any trustee or executor in complying with any application made under this section shall be deemed costs, charges, and expenses duly incurred in reference to the property to which the application relates.

(Statutory advertisements for creditors made applicable to claims for duty in like manner as to other debts of a deceased person.)

"A claim against the estate of a testator or intestate for payment of any duty accrued due from such testator or intestate in his lifetime, or otherwise than under a testamentary disposition made by him, or otherwise than under his intestacy, as the case may be, shall be deemed a claim within the meaning of the twenty-ninth section of the Act twenty-second and twenty-third years of Her Majesty, chapter twenty-eight, and accordingly an executor or administrator shall not be liable to the Crown for payment of any such duty further or otherwise than he would be liable in case the same were a debt due to any other creditor.

(Advertisements for information may be issued by Inland Revenue.)

"In case information when demanded cannot be obtained sufficient to show whether duty is or is not payable under any document (including a will or other testamentary disposition), the Receiver of Inland Revenue may cause such advertisements to be inserted as he may think proper in any newspaper, asking and offering a reward for the necessary information, and the amount of all costs incurred in so advertising shall be recoverable in like manner as if it were duty payable under the document with reference to which information is asked, and any trustee, executor, or administrator may pay such costs in like manner, and out of the same fund, as if it were duty so payable,"—(*Mr. Gregory*,)—

brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the said Clauses be read a second time."

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): Sir, the Committee is aware that the substance of this Amendment was laid before us with very great force and fairness by the hon. Member who has just sat down, and that the Prime Minister requested him to put the matter into shape. The hon. Member has done that, and Her Majesty's Government have given the subject their careful consideration. We are not prepared to accept the Amendment on the present occasion, inasmuch as it is not relevant to the clauses of the Bill now before the Committee, which does not deal with Succession Duties. But it is the intention of the Treasury to introduce an Omnibus Bill dealing with those Duties, and also for the purpose of carrying out the Treaty with Spain with reference to the Wine Duties; and we propose that the clauses which my hon. Friend has moved as an Amendment should be put into that Bill, which will give the House an opportunity of forming a judgment with regard to it. I heartily trust that nothing will occur which will remove the personal attention of my hon. Friend from this matter. Yet, if it should pass into other hands, I hope the object he has in view will be carried out, and I shall do all in my power to bring about that result.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Captain COTTON (Cheshire, Wirral): Sir, I do not know if I shall be in Order in moving this next clause, standing in the name of the noble Lord the Member for Middlesex (Lord George Hamilton); but I desire to do so, because I think it will confer a boon upon the class of people who will very much appreciate it. It is well known, both to dwellers in town and country, that there are many persons who would be very considerably benefited by the advantage contemplated in the new clause. It is unnecessary for me to occupy the time of the Committee at any length with the object and merits of the clause, which I think are tolerably self-evident. I believe that the whole amount of the Carriage Duty, in the course of the year, is not more than £600,000; and it seems to me that the amount by which this sum would be reduced, if the Amendment were accepted, is a matter for very slight consideration.

New Clause:—

(Carriage Duties.)

"Any waggon, cart, or other vehicle used solely for the conveyance of any goods or burden in the course of trade and husbandry, and which, under the thirty-second and thirty-third Victoria, chapter twenty-four, section nineteen, sub-section six, is exempted from Carriage Duties, shall not become subject to the said Duties by reason of any member of owner's family occasionally using the same as a conveyance on Sunday,"—(*Captain Cotton,*)—

brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt)(Derby): Sir, I cannot sympathize with the hon. and gallant Member who has moved the second reading of this clause. The hon. and gallant Member has referred to the amount of the Carriage Duty as amounting to the trifling sum of £600,000. Well, Sir, that seems to me a very large sum of money. The exemption which already exists was made with regard to vehicles used for the purpose of conveying persons to church; but the Amendment which the hon. and gallant Member has moved, as I understand it, is not proposed with the intention of assisting the conveyance of people to Divine worship, but for the purpose of promoting their enjoyment on Sunday, and in that sense is equally applicable to Bank Holidays, or any other days. I think the Committee will see that to pass beyond the exemption which already exists would be a change of a serious character, and I trust the Government will be supported in resisting this proposal.

Mr. BEADEL (Essex, Chelmsford): I think the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has treated this matter a little more lightly than it deserves; and I do not think that he at all meets the case when he speaks of vehicles being used on Sunday as on other days. It seems to be a very hard case that vehicles used on week-days for various purposes should not be allowed to be used on Sunday in the sense contemplated by the noble Lord.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: Perhaps the hon. Member will allow me to explain. The present exemption allows vehicles to be used on Sundays for the purpose of conveyance to Divine worship; but this Amendment would allow them to be used for other purposes.

Mr. BEADEL: As I understand the matter, they cannot be used in the afternoon, or rather that they are subject to the tax if they are so used. Well, Sir, at the present time taxation presses hardly enough on persons in every station in life; and I urge in support of the Amendment before the Committee that if any relief can be afforded in this matter, it will be regarded as a great benefit to those concerned.

Mr. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I am interested to know how the permission to use these vehicles, as set forth in the Amendment, will cost the nation anything. It may be a question whether it be right or wrong that they be so used; but certainly it seems to me the Revenue cannot be affected in the smallest degree. For my part, I should like the Committee to decide that the Carriage Tax is a very bad one.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): I think the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken does not quite appreciate the existing state of the law. The law is that whereas all vehicles were subject, in the first instance, to Carriage Duty, exemptions were allowed in the case of certain vehicles on which the names of the owners were painted and exclusively used by the persons by whom they were owned for the conveyance of any goods or burden in the course of trade or husbandry. An appeal was made to this House on the ground that it was a great hardship to a farmer and his family, that if any cart or conveyance used on a week-day for the purpose of trade should be used on Sunday for the purpose of conveying them to church or chapel, the exemption should thereupon cease. Parliament listened to that appeal, as I think, very reasonably, and said to the farmer—"If you do use your vehicle on Sunday for the purpose of conveyance to Divine worship you shall still be exempt; you shall be allowed on Sunday to use this carriage, cart, or waggon for the purpose of taking you to Divine service." Now the suggestion is that the principle of exemption should be made to apply to the using of vehicles on Sunday for the purpose of pleasure. The words of the existing law are—

> "In respect of any waggon or cart used for carrying the owner or his family to or from any place of Divine worship on Sunday, Christmas Day, or Good Friday,"

and so on. It was the intention of Parliament that the privilege of exemption should otherwise cease, and that persons should not be entitled to use their carts and waggons for pleasure excursions. If you extend the exemption to these cases, how, I ask, can you justify the tax on carriages of people who use them for such purposes on every day of the week?

MR. BRUNNER: The object of the Amendment not being an unreasonable one, and seeing it will cost the nation nothing, I shall gladly support the Motion of my hon. and gallant Colleague (Captain Cotton).

Amendment *negatived.*

Bill *reported*, without Amendment; to be read the third time *To-morrow.*

ULSTER CANAL AND TYRONE NAVIGATION BILL.—[BILL 141.]

(*Mr. John Morley, Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

NOMINATION OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That the Select Committee on the Ulster Canal and Tyrone Navigation Bill do consist of Nine Members, Five to be nominated by the House and Four by the Committee of Selection."—(*Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): I have an Amendment to propose to this Motion. I think it would be more satisfactory that the Committee should consist of nine Irish Members, and that they should be selected by this House. My proposal is to leave out all the words after the word "Members," in order to add the words "to be nominated by the House."

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "five."—(*Mr. Biggar.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'five' stand part of the Question."

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): I understand that the invariable practice of this House has been, with reference to the appointment of Select Committees, that a certain proportion of the Committee should be appointed by the House, and the remainder by that impartial tribunal on which devolves the appointment of Committees to deal with Private Bills. The House will agree, I think, that the Committee of Selection have always discharged their duties with impartiality. We shall endeavour to consult the views of Irish Members in naming the five Members, of whom, it is the intention of the Government, that four should be Members from Ireland. I myself will be the fifth; and I have no doubt whatever that the four other Members selected will be Gentlemen upon whose impartiality full reliance can be placed. Having offered these few words of explanation, I hope the hon. Member for Cavan will not think it necessary to press his Motion.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question put,

Ordered, That the Select Committee on the Ulster Canal and Tyrone Navigation Bill do consist of Nine Members, Five to be nominated by the House and Four by the Committee of Selection.

Ordered, That all Petitions against the Bill presented not later than three clear days before the sitting of the Committee be referred to the Committee, and that such of the Petitioners as pray to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, or Witnesses be heard upon their Petitions, if they think fit, and Counsel heard in favour of the Bill against such Petitions.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum of the Committee.—(*Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

House adjourned at One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 14*th May,* 1886.

MINUTES.]—Public Bill—*Second Reading*—National Debt * (100).

Their Lordships met;—and having gone through the Business on the Paper without debate,

House adjourned at half past Four o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 14*th May,* 1886.

MINUTES.] — Select Committee — Kitchen and Refreshment Rooms, Mr. A. H. Acland, Mr. Biggar, Mr. Thomas Henry Bolton, Baron Dimsdale, General Goldsworthy, and Mr. John Redmond *added;* National Provident Insurance, Mr. Abraham *disch.;* Mr. Fenwick *added.*

Public Bills—*Second Reading*—Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers) Act (1875) Amendment [211].

Third Reading—Customs and Inland Revenue * [190], and *passed.*

QUESTIONS.

VETERINARY PORTAL INSPECTORS (IRELAND).

Mr. COX (Clare, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he has received a memorial from the Veterinary Portal Inspectors under the Privy Council of Ireland praying for an inquiry into and redress of certain grievances; whether the Irish Government have yet determined so to improve the terms of employment of the Portal Inspectors as to place them on a footing analogous to that of the Veterinary Surgeons employed by the English Privy Council; and, whether, considering that the whole time of the Irish Portal Inspectors is wholly at the disposal of the public service, the Government will consider a scheme for their superannuation?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The Memorial in question has been before me; but, in present circumstances, I do not think the Government would be justified in considering the question of changes in the position of these officers who, I may observe, stand at present—in most, if not all, essential particulars — very much on the same footing as similar officers in England.

SCOTLAND—SHERIFF IVORY'S REPORT TO THE COMMISSIONERS OF SUPPLY.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether his attention has been called to the appendix of a pamphlet entitled *A Report by the Sheriff of Inverness, Elgin, and Nairn to the Commissioners of Supply of Inverness-shire;* whether the "statements" of various persons, of which the greater part of that appendix consists, are declarations made before Sheriff Ivory in the course of a formal judicial inquiry; if so, whether it is in conformity with the practice of Scottish criminal administration to publish them; whether Sheriff Ivory published them with the cognizance or consent of the Home Office or Crown authorities; and, whether he has any objection to lay upon the Table of the House Sheriff Ivory's "Report," and the replies of the Lord Advocates of the last and preceding Governments to the official letters addressed to them by Sheriff Ivory contained in the "Report?"

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I have seen the Report by the Sheriff of Inverness to the Commissioners of Supply of that county, as also the Appendix thereto. It is certainly not in accordance with the practice of Scottish criminal administration to publish information obtained in the investigation of criminal charges. The inquiry, in the course of which the statements contained in the Appendix were made, was one of a kind which, fortunately, does not often require to be entered upon in Scotland. It had reference to certain complaints which had been made by the police in regard to the conduct of a public official; and the primary question was whether he could with propriety be allowed to continue to hold his office. It was thus not a criminal investigation in the ordinary sense, though, for analogous reasons, I should consider it my duty to treat any information furnished to me under such an inquiry as confidential, except as regards any official persons who might require to consider it. I am not aware that the consent of the Home Office or of the Crown Authorities was either asked or obtained to any publication of the statements referred to. I cannot undertake to lay the Report upon the Table of this House, as it was made to a duly constituted County Authority having important statutory powers and duties with respect to the police of the county; and, although the official referred to was not in the service or under the control of the Commissioners of Supply, reasons are given in the Report which led the Sheriff to consider it proper to include the information in question in it. As I regard any correspondence between the Lord Advocate and the Sheriff of a county concerning a pending inquiry into the conduct of an official holding an office in a local Court as confidential, I cannot undertake to lay on the Table any letters, either from my Predecessor in Office or from myself, on the subject.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—DR. CROKER, DISPENSING MEDICAL OFFICER OF THE BALLYMACARRETT DIVISION OF THE BELFAST UNION.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If the Local Government Board's attention has been called to the misconduct and neglect of duty of Dr. Croker, dispensary medical officer of the Ballymacarrett Division of the Belfast Union, in refusing to visit a poor woman named Garland, at 7, Skipton Street, Ballymacarrett, who was dangerously ill in labour on the 5th ultimo, although a red line was issued by the relieving officer of the district, and personally served on Croker by the woman's husband; did Croker inform Garland that he would not go himself, but would send the official midwife, although Garland told him that he had already secured the services of a midwife, who had declared that surgical aid was indispensable, as the case was most difficult and dangerous; and that, notwithstanding this information, Croker still refused to visit the poor woman; is it true that afterwards a neighbouring surgeon (Dr. Gibson), out of sympathy for Garland in his distress, attended Mrs. Garland, and found that his services were most urgently needed; did Garland, on the 20th ultimo, make a complaint to the Guardians of Croker's conduct; was any inquiry made into the allegations; and, if so, what was the result; how often has Croker been charged with similar neglect of duty; and, will any steps be taken to prevent a repetition of such conduct towards the suffering and destitute poor in this district?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): A complaint was made regarding the non-attendance of Dr. Croker on the occasion referred to, and the matter is at present under inquiry by the Dispensary Committee of the Board of Guardians in question. The Local Government Board will see that it is fully investigated.

EVICTIONS (SCOTLAND)—ALLEGED EXTRAORDINARY EVICTION IN PERTHSHIRE.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether his attention has been called to an article in *The Perthshire Constitutional* of the 26th instant, entitled "Extraordinary Eviction Case in Perthshire," wherein it is stated that a Mr. Buchanan Hamilton, under an ancient feudal law of Scotland, had recourse to a process known as "putting to the horn," so that he could remove into the street the whole of the goods and chattels, valued at upwards of £1,000 sterling, of a feuar named Thomas Buchanan, from his villa residence, enter upon and take possession of the premises because the said feuar owed two years' feu duty, amounting only to £32; if it be true that the proprietor has advertised for sale Mr. Thomas Buchanan's villa property, amounting to the sum of £5,000 sterling, in order to secure the payment of £32 due to him for feu duty; and, whether there are not more constitutional, and less violent, methods by which landlords can recover debt; and, if not, whether Her Majesty's Government will consider the expediency of amending the Law of Scotland, as to the recovery of debts, so as prevent such violence to the feelings of the community as was caused by the case referred to, as well as the wanton destruction of so much valuable property?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): An article has appeared in *The Perthshire Constitutional* to the effect stated by the hon. Member, and I have made inquiry into the circumstances of the case, which is a most unfortunate one. Mr. Thomas Buchanan, the feuar in question, and his sister, are both well-known litigants, and have besides long objected to pay taxes, preferring that their goods should be seized and sold rather than that they should meet these debts. They seem to have latterly come to regard the payment of an annual sum of feu-duty, for certain villas belonging to them, in the same light; and I believe it is true that, under very special circumstances, the superior has had recourse to the remedies stated in the article in question. These remedies, although stringent, are quite legal; and I am constrained to think they were adopted in the belief that they would lead to payment sooner than other less severe measures. This, I am sorry to say, has not been the case, and the law was allowed to take its course. The villas were consequently advertised; but I understand they have since been withdrawn, and I hope that the feuars will adopt the simple and obvious course of paying this small debt.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—DUNGANNON PETTY SESSIONS—INTIMIDATION.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If the case of Robert Cuddy, junior, formerly referred to, has been tried at the Dungannon Petty Sessions; if there were 12 magistrates, including a resident magistrate, on the bench; if Robert Cuddy, junior, 15 years of age, was summoned by the district inspector for that he did "appear in disguise, to the terror of Her Majesty's subjects;" whether 17 witnesses were examined, and the magistrates unanimously declared that there had not been a single piece of evidence to inculpate the defendant; and, if this was the case referred to by the honourable Member for South Tyrone as intimidation by an Orangeman?

MR. W. O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.): In reference to this Question, I would like to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, Whether of the 11 magistrates named 10 were Orangemen, several of whom have themselves taken prominent part in riotous Orange demonstrations; whether the witnesses were described by the Crown Solicitor as being hostile to the Crown; whether the evidence was given with extreme reluctance and prevarication, and was at variance with what they told the police; whether, notwithstanding, it was proved that at least 10 farmers' houses had been visited by night, and that several persons admitted it was the defendant who visited the houses and questioned them as to whether they were Orangemen or Nationalists?——

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member is now, in the form of a Question, making a counter-statement of considerable length, and it is impossible that a Minister can answer a Question so asked. It would be more regular for the hon. Member to put down the Question in the ordinary way.

MR. W. O'BRIEN: Well, Sir, my name is referred to in this Question. If I am not allowed to intervene I will have to ask the indulgence of the House to amend my statement.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must give Notice in the ordinary way.

MR. W. O'BRIEN: I think I will be in Order in asking this much, at all events—Whether steps will be taken to institute prosecutions for perjury against the witnesses, and to prevent magistrates who are notorious Orange partizans from adjudicating in such cases?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that I can answer the last Question without Notice and consideration. The Papers in this matter were laid before the Attorney General, who considered there was a *primâ facie* case for investigation, and directed a prosecution. The case, accordingly, came before a Bench of 11 magistrates—whether they were Orangemen I cannot say—one of whom was a Resident Magistrate; and, after hearing the evidence of several witnesses, they unanimously decided that no case had been made out, and discharged the defendant. I would suggest that the latter part of the inquiry should be put to the hon. Member whom it concerns.

Mr. W. O'BRIEN: I beg to give Notice that on Monday I shall put a further Question on this subject.

IRELAND—EDUCATION OF THE CHILDREN OF LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the President of the Board of Trade, If he will state what arrangement has been made to provide for the better education of the children of lighthouse keepers in Ireland; to enable the keepers to attend Divine Service on Sunday; and, what rock stations are to be made relieving ones?

The SECRETARY to the BOARD (Mr. C. T. D. Acland) (Cornwall, Launceston): I can only refer the hon. Member to the President's reply of the 19th March last, and repeat the assurance therein contained, that full consideration will be given to the question as soon as the detailed information asked for from the Lighthouse Authorities has been received.

Mr. JOHNSTON said, he did not wish to trouble the hon. Gentleman; but he wished to ask if he could give any idea of the intentions of the Government?

Mr. C. T. D. ACLAND: That depends on the correspondence we receive from the Lighthouse Authorities.

WESTMINSTER HALL—ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, For what reason the public and the Volunteers are still excluded from Westminster Hall?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.): In reply to my hon. Friend, I can only say that as being responsible for the public safety I do not feel justified in now ordering any departure from the arrangements which at present obtain as to the admission of the public to Westminster Hall.

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)—ASSAULT BY A CARETAKER.

Mr. CONDON (Tipperary, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, on Monday evening 6th May, an assault was committed by a caretaker named Connell, in the employment of Thomas Phelan, of Clonmel, on James Daniell, at Cloonan, county Tipperary, in the presence of two policemen, who declined to interfere until Daniell in self-defence struck Connell, when the police arrested both parties but discharged them before they arrived at the police barrack; whether subsequently Connell visited the house of Daniell, and, shouting, swore he would shoot every one of them, meaning Daniell, whom he believed was in the house, also his mother, an old woman who is bedridden, and her daughter; whether he made furious efforts to force the door open; whether, when Daniell reported the matter to Sergeant Madden at Cloonan, who had witnessed the previous assault, he paid no attention to the complaint until Connell's son came to tell him of his father's condition; whether, when Sergeant Madden arrived on the scene, he refused to arrest Connell when requested to do so by Mr. Charles Meagher, of Cloonan House; whether a complaint of the policeman's conduct has been forwarded to the District Inspector of Carrick on Suir, Mr. Lopdell, by Mr. C. Meagher; and, whether he will see that a full and fair inquiry will be made into the matter?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): It appears that the quarrel between the parties described took place in the presence of the police, but at some distance from them. Connell gave Daniell a push, and Daniell retaliated with a blow. The police then appeared and separated them. They did not think the matter serious enough to bring before a magistrate, both parties being well known in the district. They accordingly informed the parties they could take legal proceedings against each other by summons. The same applies to what happened on the second occasion.

STATE OF IRELAND—DISTRESS IN KERRY.

Mr. JOHN O'CONNOR (Kerry, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Has Colonel Spaight, Local Government Board Inspector, Ireland, visited the parish of Glenbeigh, county of Kerry recently, by order of the Board, and has he made his report of the condition of most of the people of that parish; and, if so, will he be pleased to give the tenor of that report by having a copy of it placed upon the Table of the House?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Colonel Spaight has recently visited Glenbeigh and reported on the condition of the people there. The tenour of his Report is that much distress prevails in the locality, owing to want of employment and the stoppage of credit. The Local Government Board have issued an Order under the recent Relief Act, authorizing the Guardians to give outdoor relief under the provisions of the 2nd section, and have directed their Inspector to attend the next meeting of the Guardians and confer with them as to the administration of the relief. I have stated the purport of the Report; but it is not usual to lay such documents on the Table.

MR. E. HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): Might I be permitted to ask the right hon. Gentleman a Question on the same subject, of which I have given private Notice? It is, Whether the same state of affairs does not exist in more than that locality in Kerry; whether in Dingle there is not a state of general distress existing approaching to famine in many cases, and also in some of the islands?

MR. JOHN MORLEY: I have received no Report from these localities; but I will make inquiries.

EGYPT—THE NILE EXPEDITION, 1884-5.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is intended to ask His Highness the Khedive to give "the bronze star" to the troops employed in the Nile Expedition of 1884-5, as was done in the case of the expedition to the Eastern Soudan in 1884?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): No, Sir. The subject has been considered; but it has not been thought desirable to give effect to the suggestion contained in the Question.

INLAND REVENUE—INCOME TAX COMMISSIONERS.

MR. HICKMAN (Wolverhampton, W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he will give the names of the Income Tax Commissioners for the district of Seisdon; and, if not, would he state on what ground he objects to do so?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby) (who replied) said, he found, on inquiry, that it had never been the practice to publish the names of these Commissioners.

IRELAND—ARKLOW HARBOUR WORKS.

MR. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether he will lay any further Papers upon the Table in reference to the Arklow Harbour works and the extra cost arising from the defective plans and construction?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The Papers about Arklow Harbour that have not already been presented to Parliament are being examined, with a view to the presentation of such further Papers as it may seem desirable to publish.

CIVIL SERVICE WRITERS.

MR. VANDERBYL (Portsmouth) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If he can state what progress has been made with the consideration of the case of the Civil Service Writers since March last, and the reason for the unusual delay in arriving at a decision on the subject?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.) (who replied) said: I can only refer the hon. Member to the answer which I gave on the 6th instant on this subject to the hon. Members for Central Hackney and Gravesend—namely, that the question of the Civil Service Writers is receiving the most careful attention of the Treasury; but that I cannot undertake to fix the date at which the decision of the Treasury will be arrived at.

VACCINATION—THE ISLAND OF RUGEN.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether any, and if so, what, reply has been received to the promised inquiry as to the fatal cases of vaccination in the Island of Rügen?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): Her Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin has not yet forwarded the Report which was called for in accordance with the suggestion of the hon. Member; but His

Excellency's attention will again be called to the matter.

TRADE AND COMMERCE — THE CONVENTION WITH SPAIN—BRITISH COLONIAL PRODUCE.

MR. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether, under the new Convention with Spain, goods, the produce of British Colonies, entering Spain or Spanish Colonies, will enjoy most favoured nation treatment?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): Her Majesty's Government are no less desirous to secure any commercial benefits for our Colonies than for the Mother Country, and they have therefore taken care to secure that goods and manufactures, the produce of British Colonies, should enjoy under the new Convention with Spain, when ratified, most favoured nation treatment in Spain and the Spanish Colonies.

CANADIAN FISHERIES—THE "DAVID J. ADAMS."

MR. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether fishermen in a boat belonging to the American fishing vessel *D. J. Adams* recently entered the basin of Annapolis and purchased bait while within three miles of the shore of Nova Scotia; whether Article 1 of the United States Convention of 1818, which now regulates all questions of fishery rights on those coasts as between American and British subjects, specifically forbids American fishermen from approaching within the three miles limit except for purposes of shelter, repairing damages, and purchasing wood or water; whether the *D. J. Adams* has in consequence been arrested by the British authorities; whether any other cases of illegal infringement of the existing fishery agreements have been reported to Government during the past six weeks; and, whether, seeing that Her Majesty's Government promised on April 19th to spare no efforts to settle any disputes that might arise as to the exercise of fishery rights under the 1818 Convention, steps are now being taken to arrange this particular dispute, and also permanently to terminate so unsatisfactory a state of affairs?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to refer the hon. Member to the answer given in the House last night to the Question of the hon. Member for Central Sheffield by the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, to whom Questions on this subject had better be addressed. Another case of seizure occurred last April, in which the United States vessel was released. In regard to the last paragraph of the hon. Member's Question, Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that until the facts of the case of the *D. J. Adams* have been established, it would be premature to consider the question of any diplomatic action.

THE WESTERN PACIFIC—THE NEW HEBRIDES.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, If the French Ambassador has been given clearly to understand that Her Majesty's Government cannot upon any consideration entertain His Excellency's proposals for the further acquisition by France of the New Hebrides Islands on the Australian Coast, and the consequent abandonment of the valuable work of civilisation among its independent native population of the British Presbyterian Church?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN) (Denbighshire, E.): There appears to be some misunderstanding on this question both here and in the Colonies. The facts are simply these. The French Government some time ago laid certain proposals before Her Majesty's Government, embodying a declaration on their part that they would not send any convicts to the Pacific, and a consent on our part to the French Government occupying the New Hebrides. Her Majesty's Government were of opinion that this proposal, which would put an end to the question of sending any convicts to the Pacific, was worth full consideration; but that in no case could it be entertained, excepting under three conditions—(1) that it provided full protection and freedom for religion and for trade in the New Hebrides; (2) that it was accompanied by the cession of the Island of Rapa; and (3) that the opinion of the Australasian Colonies, to which Her Majesty's Government attached the greatest importance, should first be ascertained. The Earl of Rosebery informed the French Ambassador that it was necessary to consult the Australasian Colonies, and that, therefore, no answer could be given till the end of April; but he did not disguise from the French Ambassador that, in his opinion, it was, to say the least, improbable that the Colonies would assent to the French proposals. The telegraphic answers from the Colonies are unfavourable, excepting those from New South Wales and New Zealand, of which the Governments were disposed to entertain the plan. M. Waddington has been privately informed by the Earl of Rosebery of the nature of these answers, and of the probable result; but no formal reply has been given, as the correspondence with the Colonies is not yet complete.

THE IRISH POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT—MEETING AT BELFAST.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If he has received the Resolutions from the Association of Irish Non-Subscribing Presbyterians, passed at a meeting in Belfast, on Tuesday 11th May 1886, which contain the following passage:—

> "That the peace and prosperity of Ireland and the satisfaction of the just aspirations of her people are dear to all its members, and they will welcome any measure in which these objects are adequately recognised; but that they firmly and respectfully reject the overtures embodied in the provisions of the Government Bill on the grounds that this measure, by subverting the present Constitution, which preserves the rights and liberties of Ireland through the legislation of the Imperial Parliament, will introduce fresh conflicts in Ireland, will disturb the public confidence essential to economic welfare, and will stimulate the sentiment of separation from Great Britain;"

and, if he will lay his reply upon the Table of the House?

Mr. SEXTON (Sligo, S.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that Question I should like to ask him if he is aware that this meeting was attended by only 26 persons; also that an Amendment declaring approval of the policy and the measure of the right hon. Gentleman was supported by one-third of the meeting; and whether he is aware that the hon. Gentleman who puts this Question has of late repeatedly and publicly advised his friends to base the success of their opposition to the policy of the Government not on resolutions, but on rifles?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think this is a Question which does not arise fairly out of the Question on the Paper, nor do I think it ought to be answered.

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I will not make any comment whatever on the Question of the hon. Member. Whether it be a fit subject in any respect for remark at the present moment or not I reserve for further consideration and for the opportunities which debate may legitimately offer; but at present I confine myself to the Question. It is not for me to say that the meeting which has taken place requires the Parliamentary Notice which the hon. Member has given it; but as he has given it that Notice, I think the Notice ought to be a little more complete than he has made it. He does not appear to have read the entire document that proceeded from these gentlemen.

Mr. JOHNSTON: If the right hon. Gentleman will pardon me for interrupting him, I asked the Clerk at the Table if I could put in the entire document, and I was told I could not.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: That shows, I think, the difficulty of putting partial Questions of this kind. My contention is that the paragraph, as it stands, does not represent the genuine and legitimate feeling of the meeting, or of the majority referred to by the hon. Member opposite. I hope I may be permitted somewhat to enlarge the reference made to the sentiments of this meeting. The paragraph, I believe, is a perfectly genuine one; but the meeting followed it up by saying—and they do this in order to strengthen their argument advanced in the paragraph quoted—

> "That they feel themselves justified by their previous attitude to measures of the Prime Minister, especially his disestablishment policy, in urging upon him to withdraw the Bill with a view to a policy which shall more maturely deal with the difficulties of the Irish Question, and that in urging this course on Mr. Gladstone they believe they are expressing not merely their own convictions of what is right, but the view also of a not inconsiderable body of Irishmen who have appreciated most highly the spirit and the power of his leadership."

That is what has prevented him from reading out the later paragraphs. I am glad the hon. Member has enabled me to bring this under the notice of the House. With respect to my reply, I do not think it is worthy of being enshrined in a Parliamentary Paper. It is not very long, and I am perfectly willing to read it to the hon. Member if it be agreeable to the House—

> "Sir, I am desired by Mr. Gladstone to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th instant, forwarding a copy of a resolution passed at the special meeting of the Association of Irish Non-Subscribing Presbyterians on the subject of the Bill for the future Government of Ireland. While regretting that the Association are unable to approve the Bill, Mr. Gladstone is glad to be reminded that he has been in harmony with them on many occasions. He observes, also, with satisfaction that they perceive there is an Irish question which they wish to be seriously dealt with; and he has no doubt if Parliament should deem further time to be required for treating the particulars of the measure in a satisfactory manner, it will in the course of the free discussion now proceeding make known its wish accordingly."

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

IMPORT DUTIES.—RESOLUTION.

MR. JENNINGS (Stockport), in rising to move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, it is expedient to raise a larger portion of the Revenue of the Country from Import Duties, and that such Duties should be levied on certain descriptions of fully manufactured Foreign goods, entering into competition with similar goods of our own make; and that the Revenue so obtained should be applied to the reduction of the Duties on tea, coffee, and cocoa, and of other burdensome imposts,"

said: The Motion of which I have given Notice may be objected to on the ground that it amounts to a proposal to resort to an exploded policy of Protection. An Amendment has been put upon the Paper by the hon. Member for Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell) in which such a view is set forth. I have no doubt the hon. Member will advocate his Amendment with ability and fairness; but I hope that the House will not too hastily conclude that this is a mere Motion for the revival of old-fashioned Protection. I think I shall be able to show that it is something very different from that. I shall submit that the measures which I have ventured to suggest would have the double effect of enriching the Revenue and of tending to improve the condition of some of our great industries. That there is much room for improvement in both these directions cannot, I think, be contested in any quarter of the House. The work of carrying on the Government of the country becomes more and more costly year by year. In 1850 the sum of £55,000,000 sufficed to meet the Expenditure of the State; but in 1885 £100,000,000 was demanded of us, and this year we are required to pay £90,000,000. Now, while this increase in Expenditure has been going on, the means of raising the requisite money have been contracted in pursuance of a policy adopted 40 years ago, when we had a totally different set of circumstances to deal with. There has been of late years no increase at all in the elasticity of the Revenue; on the contrary, we have noticed, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer has called the attention of the House to the fact, that every source from which we obtain Revenue is somewhat on the decline. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has, indeed, this year discovered some encouraging symptoms in the increased consumption of foreign eggs, bacon, and rabbit-skins; but I am not able to say that this discovery has tended to remove the uneasiness and anxiety which hangs so heavily over the manufacturing districts. The smaller class of tradesmen in the country are suffering to a degree which few persons outside that class can conceive; there are thousands of them who would have been far better off to-day had they retired from business four or five years ago. The middle class, as we call it, feels also with increasing severity the pressure of taxation. The Income Tax is a heavy burden on many persons who are ordinarily accounted rich, but who find it very difficult at the close of the year to solve the homely problem of making both ends meet. The facts and figures show that the working classes are by no means as well off as many people suppose them to be. We are, indeed, constantly assured that the working classes were never so prosperous as they are now. But there can be no doubt whatever that the working classes are suffering grievously though silently. The Returns of their Friendly Societies, if we could get access to them, would prove that fact beyond all dispute. There are one or two of these Societies which have made known a few important facts bearing on that point—for instance, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers has informed the country that it had 4,000 men on its funds at the beginning of the year. The Society of Carpenters and Joiners also had 3,904 men on its funds; and it is well known that the drain upon the resources of these Societies has been growing more and more severe for the last two or three years. As for the volume of trade, it is, taken alone, an utterly delusive test of the prosperity of a nation. The argument is that as long as the quantities go up it does not matter much how far the values go down. You are to look at the quantities alone as the test of a nation's prosperity. That is to say, that if tradesmen and merchants are selling a larger quantity of goods this year than they did last, it is quite immaterial to ask them at what price they are selling them, or at what profit. This is the scientific way of looking at it; but it is not the way in which the matter is looked at by merchants and tradesmen who are obliged to make their books balance at the end of the year, and who could never do so on this principle. That the decline of the value of our commerce is very great can easily be ascertained by anybody who will refer to the Board of Trade Returns. No doubt, if I were to make any statement which I did not prove, I should be instantly contradicted; therefore, I feel it my duty to support my statements by the facts which I have been able to procure. As to the declining values of some of our chief commodities, I desire to call the attention of the House to the fact that we exported cotton goods in 1880 to the value of £63,662,443; in 1884 that had fallen to £58,935,154. In iron and steel our exports amounted in 1880 to £28,390,000; in 1884 they had fallen to £24,496,000. Chemical products, which the Earl of Beaconsfield looked upon, and rightly, as testing the condition of many trades, sank from £2,384,000 in 1880 to £1,403,000 in 1884. Linen manufacture showed a falling off of about £700,000. Concurrently with this downward movement, there has been an ominous decline in the value of some of the imports of the raw material of our industries. We are not only exporting less, but naturally we are importing less of the raw material of some of our manufactures. I will take raw cotton as an example. In 1882 we imported raw cotton to the value of £46,654,570; it fell to £45,047,796 in 1883, and to £44,485,889 in 1884. These figures are not often adduced in discussions of this kind, because it is much more convenient to assert that any proposal having the end that I have before me is a stupid, ignorant, and mischievous Protectionist proposal; it being always easier to abuse an argument than to answer it. But I can assert that in Lancashire, Cheshire, and Yorkshire these facts are sinking deeply into the minds of the working classes. I would not be understood to say a disrespectful word of the hon. Member for Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell), who has placed a Notice of Amendment to my Resolution upon the Paper; but I would call the attention of the hon. Member to the fact that the industry with which he is best acquainted and most familiar is the one which is least likely to be affected by foreign competition; nor is it, indeed, in London at all that we shall first see the serious results of unfair foreign competition and hostile tariffs. We shall first find them in the great centres of our industries. One of those centres I myself have the honour to represent; and I can most truly assert that there is no question there which so touches the interests of working men—there is not a Scotch or English question—not even the Irish Question—which so deeply concerns the working men as this question of the conditions under which they carry on their own trade. One is frequently met on the threshold of the discussion by a denial that any serious depression exists. Only a few nights ago in this House I heard the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) give it as his opinion that the degree of commercial depression had been much exaggerated. I do not think that he will find a dozen men engaged in business who will agree with him. On the 6th of this month, the hon. Member for Southwark (Mr. Thorold Rogers) told the House that—

> "I certainly believe that the panic itself has been mightily exaggerated. I am quite ready to admit that the Manchester cotton spinners are badly off, and if the time were suitable I could give a reason for it. I believe, further, that the coal and iron industries, except in the case of intelligent men like my hon. Friend the Member for Banbury (Sir Bernhard Samuelson), are suffering, and I think a good case could be made out to show that the agricultural interest is in a state of great depression; but the depression is either temporary or remedial. I do not believe that the great mass of the industry of the country is in a state of depression. I find that pauperism is decreasing; that the deposits in the savings' banks are increasing; and that, on the whole, the extra penny of Income Tax produces as much as it did

> before. Of course, I shall be told that the officials at Somerset House look after it more sharply than they did. That, no doubt, is one of the explanations the panic-mongers are always prepared to offer; but I believe that one of the most mischievous things which has occurred in this country is the incessant declamation about the depression of trade, and that if the facts were really known it would be found that the public at large have been gulled."—(3 *Hansard*, [305] 447-8.)

It seems, then, that we may have the cotton industry depressed, the coal trade depressed, the iron trade depressed, and the agricultural industry depressed, and yet we may still have the main sources of industry in the country remain in a flourishing state. I should like to know where the hon. Member for Southwark supposes that the main industries of the country are carried on? Of course, it would not be worth while, having an admission such as this before us, to go into the assertions just quoted and show their inaccuracy; but it is a great inaccuracy to assert that pauperism is decreasing. The fact is, that at the end of 1883 the number of paupers in the country was 714,704, and at the end of 1885 it was 743,478. The hon. Member is, I believe, a distinguished Professor; but it is an unlucky circumstance that Professors generally have thus far shown themselves unable to get a good tight hold of this Trade Question. It is not a subject to be settled, or even to be understood, by the application of what they are accustomed to call fixed laws and immutable principles. It can only be comprehended by going out into the actual world of trade and ascertaining what is really taking place there, and not what ought to be taking place if theories are working well. Anyone who does that will find that our great industries are no longer expanding in accordance with the increase of population; while some of them are absolutely declining. I shall be obliged to prove this statement in order that it may not be contradicted at a subsequent period of the evening, and I will very briefly mention a few facts to the House which I think are certain not to be contested. In Macclesfield, prior to 1860, there were 55 mills at work, employing 14,000 hands. There are now 30 mills entirely closed, and not more than 6,000 or 7,000 hands find employment. Mr. Dixon, the President of the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce, stated to the Royal Commission lately that the value of house property in that town had gone down 30 or 40 per cent, and the value of land outside the town at least 40 per cent. He further said—

> "Then there are the American duties. I had a fine trade with America about 25 years ago—a magnificent trade. I had an agent there who was paid £400 a-year to keep stock there, and who did a big business. It is all gone, and I do not send sixpennyworth to the United States to-day."

The cotton trade, which some Members representing London constituencies seem to think is a matter of extremely little consequence, is in a state calculated to excite the most serious anxieties of those who have a large capital at stake in it. I do not state this as a mere matter of theory, but as a matter of fact, after personal inquiry throughout the larger part of the cotton district. But, lest my opinion should be regarded as of no concern, I would ask the House to look into the valuable Report of the Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade, where they will find a great body of evidence on the subject. I will only, however, trouble the House with one locality as an example of what I mean, and I will take the best locality which can be found in the whole of the country—namely, Oldham. I choose that because it represents more than one-fourth of the whole cotton spinning trade in Great Britain. The mills in Oldham are fitted up with the best and newest machinery. The co-operative system is largely adopted; immense amounts of capital have been invested, and great enterprize has been shown, and yet the Spinning Companies, which made on an average 7 per cent in 1882, and 7½ per cent in 1883, made but 5 per cent in 1884, and returned actual losses in 1885. Mr. S. Andrew, the Secretary to the Oldham Master Cotton Spinners' Association, makes the following important statement:—

> "But what I say is, that the margin between the raw material and the manufactured article is less than ever it has been before in the history of the trade, at least for the last 30 years; and that, therefore, in that sense, trade is more depressed to-day than it has been during that time."

There is universal depression; and no one, I believe, who represents the cotton districts in this House, will assert that the trade of any district is advancing in proportion to the increase of the population. In other branches of trade it is getting but too common for the manufacturers to remove their capital and their means of carrying on their business to other countries. That is being done to a much greater extent than many people in London are aware of, and if continued it will inflict misfortunes upon the working classes such as few of us, I believe, dream of at this moment. It is by no means difficult to drive capital away from any country. It may be done by over-taxation; it may be done by offering to foreign nations undue advantages; it may be done by menaces and threats used sometimes in political controversies; but when once capital is driven away it is not so easy to tempt it back again, nor will it be easy to send our working people after it. The working classes at present are completely bewildered by what they see going on around them. The silk weavers, to whom I have referred, went down without a struggle; but then they belonged to what is called a weak industry, and, of course, weak industries ought to perish—at any rate, so the philosophers say. I, for my part, deeply regret to see any industry of this country perish; I deeply regret to see an industry belonging to this country—an ancient and once profitable industry—die out as the silk trade is doing. I think it is a national misfortune. Do you suppose that 1,500,000 operatives engaged in the cotton and textile industries will sink so quietly? At this moment they see their employment going from them; they see the mills going upon short time, and they do not understand what it is that is hurting them. When they do understand it—and the truth is beginning to dawn upon their minds—you will find that there will arise a Rights of Labour Question in England which will astound many eminent statesmen, and cause some of the philosophers to wish that they had never been born. Now, the existence of this depression is sometimes admitted. Occasionally, even in this House, it is admitted; but it is generally coupled with brilliant predictions that it will pass over soon—that it is a thing of yesterday, and to-morrow it will be gone. Now, I should like to know upon what bases these sanguine predictions of returning prosperity are founded. Practical men can see very little sign, if any, of renewed prosperity. They may hope for better days, but they cannot point to any signs of their return. The truth is, that the whole conditions under which we are trading with the rest of the world have been entirely changed since 1846. At that period the kind of manufactures which were required for the daily use of mankind could not be obtained by foreign nations unless they came to us for them. They had not learned to make them for themselves. They sent us their cotton, or their corn, and we sent them back our manufactures; and while that system lasted I need not say that nothing could be more advantageous to the nation. There are many perfectly honest and simple-minded persons who believe that this system is in operation to this hour. Mr. Cobden thoroughly believed that it would remain in existence for an indefinite period. He said, some years ago—

> "If we bought corn largely from America, the Americans would be obliged to take our manufactures from us in exchange. This would lead to an increased demand for labour in the manufacturing districts, which would necessarily be attended with a rise of wages, in order that the goods might be made for the purpose of exchanging for the corn brought from abroad."

Now, that is the way the system did work for a time; but a great change has come over it. America to-day actually does not buy enough commodities of us to serve as an equivalent for the raw cotton which we are obliged to buy of her. In 1844 we purchased of her raw cotton to the value of over £31,000,000; our total exports to her of our products and manufactures was valued at £24,500,000. We bought goods of her of various kinds to the value of £86,250,000; and our sales to her, as just quoted, brought in only £24,500,000. That is the condition under which we are carrying on trade with the United States. Let me refer the House to the statements of Mr. Ellis, Chairman of the well-known firm of John Brown and Company, and other large establishments. He was asked before the Royal Commission—

> "Is it the case that those from whom we are importing this considerable supply of food are taking in return an increased amount of our produce?"

He said—

> "No; it is not."

"You agree," he was asked—

> "that that must react upon those who are engaged in the manufacture of products which might be exchanged for that imported food,

and that diminished employment in consequence results in the diminished production of wealth in this country?"

He said—

> "It must be so."

Mr. Lord, of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, testifies that

> "Many trades that formerly had their centre in Birmingham, solely for the world's supply, are now distributed for competition between four or five different countries.

And so it is with the trades of other districts. Now, in former days it was held to be the duty of every practical statesman to modify the commercial system of a country in accordance with the changing attitude of that country towards foreign nations. This was the principle laid down in this House by Mr. Huskisson, and quoted more than once as authoritative and binding upon us by Sir Robert Peel. Mr. Huskisson, on the 21st of March, 1825, said in this House that he recommended certain changes—

> "Because the circumstances and state of the world have changed; and it becomes us, as practical statesmen, to deal with those [commercial] interests with a reference to that change. . . . General theories," he added, "however incontrovertible in the abstract, require to be weighed with a calm circumspection, to be directed by a temperate discretion, and to be adapted to all the existing relations of society, with a careful hand, and a due regard to the establishments and institutions which have grown up under those relations."—(*New Series*, [12] 1098.)

Sir Robert Peel quoted that statement of Mr. Huskisson, and asked the House whether these were not the words of practical wisdom? Most people, if they approached the subject with fair and open minds, would answer "yes;" but in these days we are, as we think, more enlightened. We maintain that we have devised a commercial system which is beyond reach of change or improvement, and which must remain unalterable for all time to come, no matter what course may be pursued by the rest of the world, or what the condition of our own working men may be. I say that no one ever lived, or ever will live, who will be able to devise such a system of trade as that. It must be modified to suit the changing circumstances around us, in our own condition, and in the necessities of the working men. If the world changes its attitude towards you, you must change yours towards the world. This is part of the "immutable law," if philosophers only knew it. But we say we will never depart from the principles of 1846, and foreigners most earnestly commend our firmness and hope we shall stick to it. It enables them to come into this country and compete with us, and with our workmen, on terms of every possible sort of disadvantage to us. They say that if they can support their own industries they can always find a market for their surplus products, as they can pour them in upon us at any price—at unnaturally depreciated prices—not fairly competing with us at all, but competing at prices below the fair level. In that way they can make their industries flourish no matter what may happen to ours. Now, I maintain that even if a certain amount of cheapness were the result of this—if, for instance, you could buy foreign cotton goods in this market at a smaller price than you could buy similar goods of our own make—I do not hesitate to assert that it would not be an advantage to this country. It would not, in the case I have referred to, be an advantage to this country to buy cheaper cotton goods if our great cotton industry were weakened thereby. You cannot injure any great industry without bringing losses and misfortunes upon thousands of persons who stand beyond the circle of that industry. It used to be thought in this country that you could injure the agricultural interest, and that the manufacturing interest would still flourish. Well, we are paying dearly for that piece of folly, and shall have to pay more dearly still hereafter. The old theory was—and I dare say we shall be told pretty much the same thing again, presently—that consumers alone must be studied. But what the thousands of working men distributed throughout this country begin to understand is that you cannot have a nation of consumers unless they are first producers. It is quite impossible that you can proceed upon the theory that you are founding your industries and carrying on your trade for the benefit of consumers, leaving out of regard altogether the producers. I would not, however, venture to state to the House any opinion of my own upon this subject, because I can give it the opinion of one who is a high authority. I am quite sure hon. Members will receive with respect the opinion of the present Prime Minister on this important person, the consumer. In receiving a deputation of various Trade Councils on the 18th of May, 1881, he said—

> "We do not regard with any satisfaction the system under which an artificial advantage is given in our markets to the products of foreign labour, the principle to be observed being that of equality. Some people say it is a good thing, because the consumer gets the benefit of it; but I do not think that any benefit founded on inequality and injustice can bring good even to the consumer."

Now, I will quote one more piece of testimony from the other side of the House. I do not know whether the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) is a political economist or not, but I suppose he would be regarded as some sort of authority. I will give the House what he said on the point some years ago—

> "The orthodox doctrine has been that the interests of civilization are best promoted by the supply of his goods to the consumer at the lowest possible rate."

I need not, perhaps, say that this speech was not made in the House. It was calculated for the meridian of Lancashire. He went on—

> "But the social idea interposes. It is clear, on reflection, that the economic proposition is not really tenable, and that nobody acts as if it were so."

So much for the consumer. Inequality and injustice, the Prime Minister says, are to be avoided. Well, these are the very things that our working men are now complaining of. What they say—and, of course, the subject presents itself to them in a very simple fashion—is, "We see that the foreigner will not take a single thing that we make without putting heavy taxes upon it, and the wise people up in London, the great philosophers and statisticians say—'That does not hurt you, but the foreigner who puts the tax on.' But our masters tell us that it has had the effect of diminishing the demand for our goods in America, and Germany, and every other country; and, therefore, it does hurt us very considerably." They say—"This is very unfair indeed, and there ought to be some means of putting a tax upon foreign goods also which come into direct competition with ours." It may be said that our workmen have not been properly trained; but if you look around a little further beyond the sphere of our workmen, you discover something which, I think, must often astonish hon. Gentlemen who have been brought up to take a certain narrow view of this question, and who never look beyond it. It is that every nation on the face of the earth adopts the system which I desire to recommend, only carrying it to a very much greater extent than I am prepared to advise. What they say is—"Foreigners who come to our ports, who have the advantage of our commercial facilities, of our police and everything else that they require, ought to pay, and shall pay, a certain proportion of keeping up the Government." And, as we are all aware, they have pursued that course for years and years. It is not because they have not been pelted incessantly with Cobden Club pamphlets that they have not abandoned it. There have been enough Cobden Club pamphlets and leaflets discharged upon America almost to bury it alive. I have seen the air white in that country with Cobden Club pamphlets, and, of course, the general effect of them is to deepen the belief of every foreign nation which receives them in the virtue and value of Protection. It is the most protective influence that I am aware of in existence at this moment. I am personally always delighted to assist in the dispersal of these documents, as an agency for promulgating my own opinions. You will find, on turning over these invaluable pamphlets, and you will also hear in other quarters, of the "Large Free Trade Party in the United States." But it is only in this country that you hear of that Party. When you go to the United States, naturally enough the first thing you do on getting up in the morning is to go out and look for the Free Trade Party. But you never see it, for the simple reason that it is not there. All the Free Traders in any State in the Union might easily be put into a one-horse omnibus without the slightest inconvenience either to the horse or to themselves. There is, no doubt, a large party who demand tariff reform; but tariff reform is a very different thing from what we mean by Free Trade. The Tariff Reformer in the United States is no more adverse to the system of raising the chief part of the Revenues required at the Custom House than the out-and-out Protectionist; and if any one on the other side of the House says the American tariff reformer is the right thing to be, I say that I am a tariff reformer, and earnestly desire to see that kind of American Free Trade adopted here. But we say that the Americans on this subject are a poor benighted set of people—we say that they do not know their own interests, and that they ought to come to us to be taught the elements of political economy. Well, I have no doubt the Americans would come to us to be taught political economy, or anything else, if they could see their way to make it pay; but what they contend is, that this is not a question of political economy at all, but a question of the welfare and prosperity of their people. And they point to the result of their system as affording the clearest proof of the superior advantage of their policy. We hear a great deal of our prosperity since 1846, and no doubt we shall hear a great deal more about it presently; but I should like to know very much what our prosperity has been, compared with that of the United States, during the last 25 years? Why, there is nothing in the history of mankind at all to be compared with it for a single instant. I could quote evidence on the question almost without limit; but my time, I know, is brief, and I am anxious not to overburden the House with evidence, in order that I may not unnecessarily occupy even a moment of time. I must, however, call the attention of the House to the fact that the growth of America and American industries has had nothing to do with its land; but that the pure growth of its industries under the system of Protection has been simply startling. In 1850 there were only 957,000 hands, all told, employed in American manufactures; in 1880 there were 2,700,000. In 1850 the whole produce of American manufactures was valued at a little over $1,000,000,000. In 1880 it amounted to $5,369,000,000. Between 1871 and 1883 the increase of cotton worked up by the Americans was 569,000,000 lbs.; our increase was only 362,000,000 lbs. Now, if everything withers up under Protection, if Protection is fatal to the growth of industries, I hope that some ingenious Member will be so kind as to explain how it is that America has made this wonderful progress, and what right she has to these industries at all under such an unsound system as Protection. The fact is that America must be a standing wonder to everybody who believes that a protected system is necessarily fatal to industry. We are told that we must not tax foreign goods, because to do that would be a violation of the sacred principle of Free Trade. Well, Sir, it seems to me sometimes that there are very few sacred principles beyond the reach of violation in these days. We have recently heard, on very high authority, that there is no such thing in the British Constitution as a fundamental law. And as for political economy—poor political economy!—that is bundled out of the window unceremoniously whenever it is in the way. Hon. Gentlemen opposite often tell us that the Democracy is bound to be victorious over other forces in the State. ["Hear, hear!"] Well, I am not going to dispute that; but let me tell those hon. Members that the triumph, when it comes, will be accompanied by some results for which they are little prepared. The first thing which the triumphant Democracy will demand will be high, if not protective, tariffs. ["Oh, oh!"] It is easy to say "Oh, oh!" but if anyone who says it will point out to me a single Democracy on the face of the earth that is not protective he will be doing a substantial service to his side of the question. You cannot alter facts by crying "Oh, oh!" in the House of Commons. There is no important Democracy on the face of the earth at this moment which has not adopted high or protective tariffs. You would suppose that the Americans certainly do not need Protection for their agriculture, yet they have a duty equal to 5*s.* a-quarter on corn, they have a duty on cheese, a duty on butter, and commodities of that kind, all of which they produce in vast quantities and send over to this country. I regret to say that more "Cheshire" cheese comes from America than from that part of the country I have the honour to represent. In France, again, the peasantry have repeatedly demanded a higher duty on agricultural produce; and if anyone supposes that when the land of this country is divided into small allotments, the cultivator will stand by sweetly smiling whilst the foreigner comes in and undersells him, he must be a dreamer of dreams. The facts will be too much for that theory, and it will perish with the rest of the theories which were good enough 40 years ago. Though they were good enough in 1846, they have no real applicability to the circumstances in which we find ourselves placed in 1886. Sir, the subject is much too vast for me to hope to do more than touch the mere surface of it. I would only point out that what our working men at present seek is not a protective tariff. What they ask for is only a moderate scale of duties upon manufactured goods. ["No, no!"] Well, my constituents ask for it. I am returned to this House by as large a number of working men as any single Member opposite. ["No, no!"] I was elected to this House by more than half of the total possible vote of my constituency, and they ask for such duties; and perhaps hon. Members will condescend to permit me to speak for my own constituents. They ask that a moderate duty should be put upon goods which come into direct competition with their own; and it would be no answer to them to assert, even if it were true, that political economists are against it. But it is not true. People only think it is true, because they will not read books on political economy. I do not blame them, because of all the dry, despairing books to get through those on political economy are the worst. I have here some extracts from the great political economists—from Adam Smith downwards; and if I were not afraid of wearying the House and exhausting my time I would read them. I will, however, assert that everybody who goes through Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, and the works of other writers, will find that they never deny that it is good policy for one nation to put duties upon the commodities of another nation, in return for a similar policy adopted towards themselves. I will read to the House three lines from another authority on the subject, who says—

> "The only mode in which a country can save itself from being a loser by the revenue duties imposed by other countries on its commodities is to impose corresponding revenue duties on theirs."

That was written by John Stuart Mill, who used to be accounted a good enough Liberal for anybody or anything. Perhaps now he would not be reckoned such an high authority; but, at any rate, his authority was great. Now, what are the causes of the existing depression? They vary very much in different localities. I hope no hon. Member will do me the injustice of supposing that I am going to assert that moderate duties on imported goods will have the effect of restoring all the industries of this country. I do not put forward any such absurd theory; but it is highly important to ascertain, as I have already endeavoured to show that there is depression, what are the causes of that depression? Now, there are two causes to which nearly all the Chambers of Commerce agree in tracing it, at least in part—namely, foreign competition and hostile tariffs. The evidence may be found in the Reports of the Royal Commission; but a few, a very few, extracts, by way of indicating the nature of that evidence, I will ask permission to give.

> "These are at the bottom of all our troubles,"

reports the Chamber of Commerce for Barnsley and district to the Royal Commission. Cardiff reports—

> "Hostile tariffs have materially affected our iron and steel trades."

Huddersfield complains of

> "The large import of foreign yarns, which is monthly increasing, and gradually beating down the home spinner in our own markets."

Leeds reports—

> "Foreign tariffs have seriously injured the trade of this district."

These are the Reports of the Chambers of Commerce. Then, the Liverpool General Brokers' Association say that the effects of foreign competition are "very serious," and that foreign tariffs are "ruining some important trades." The Bleachers' Association declare that they are suffering from excessive import duties. The North of England Iron Manufacturers' Association send word that foreign tariffs and bounties

> "Have annihilated almost all trade with Germany, Russia, France, Spain, and the United States of America."

The Paper Makers' Association earnestly desire "perfectly Free Trade with other countries," and declare

> "That the tendency of much modern legislation has been to handicap the British manufacturer as against his foreign competitor."

I have many more extracts here, but I refrain from reading them. The whole tenour of these Reports is that foreign competition and hostile tariffs, between them, are murdering British commerce.

It ought not to be so. They ought to benefit British commerce. The more competition and Protection in the world, the better it will be for us as Free Traders. So say the theorists. But it does not work so in practice. Let a man turn his eyes from the books on political economy, or his rows of statistics, and look at the world around him. He will see that the machinery is not working as he supposed, and that something has gone wrong with it. The Birmingham Chamber of Commerce — Birmingham, of all places in the world—traces the cause of depression partly to "foreign competition in neutral markets." Neutral markets! This statement will very much astonish many distinguished persons who have been systematically assuring us that Americans and other nations cannot compete with us in neutral markets. I have briefly endeavoured to show that in these subjects the Professors have put themselves out of court. They will have to go through a course of practical training, and endeavour to study the real causes which are at work in producing depressed trade, before their evidence is entitled to be heard. But why is it that so many of these wise men imagine that foreign nations cannot get into neutral markets? What is there to prevent them? If people who hold to the delusion that Americans and others cannot compete with us there would but look into the Consular Reports of which we have heard lately in this House, their eyes would be opened. In Japan the trade of the United States is now nearly as great as our own. In Shanghai and other Chinese ports our Consuls report that Lowell is threatening Manchester. In India American competition is daily becoming more formidable. We, ourselves, spend nearly £5,000,000 a-year in buying their manufactures—not much, it may be said; but I would rather see this £5,000,000 spent in articles made by English men and women. I believe it would be better for us. The American and Swiss watch trade is utterly ruining our own; in fact, there is no description of trade in which foreign competition is not making itself felt more and more. Of course, it must be understood that we are only at the beginning of this business. It cannot be shown, nor do I wish to show, that the amount of foreign goods coming in here is equal to the amount of our goods going into foreign countries; but the advantage the foreigner is gaining over us is increasing, and is affecting us more and more every year. You may depend on it that it will increase. There is nothing to stop it. When there is a surplus of any description of foreign goods in any foreign market it is poured in upon ours, and sold for what it will fetch. ["Hear, hear!"] Though some one says "Hear, hear!" I must, for my own part, repeat the assertion that I have made, that I do not consider that mere cheapness is everything in such a question as this. If you ruin your own industries, the cheapness of the foreign goods which you buy will not make you richer. Since foreign competition is thus inflicting practical injury upon us, according to the Reports of these Chambers of Commerce, what I want to ask is why you should not raise revenue from it? That principle, as I have shown, is adopted by every other nation. I desire that a portion, at least, of the Revenue which we require should be raised from duties upon certain descriptions of goods. It will be said—"Produce your list; you are only dealing with the matter in an abstract manner, and there are no goods on which you could levy a tax." Well, before I sit down I will produce a list. I do not wish to deal in an abstract manner with this question. I have the deepest conviction of its importance to the working classes of the country, and I will produce a list presently. But what I wish to point out is that, although I am well aware that I shall not be successful in my object to-night, yet that we shall be compelled to adopt the system I propose by two irresistible forces—the one is the stress of our own necessities, and the other is the demands of our working men. They will insist, in spite of all the doctrinaires in the world, and of all the sleepers in the enchanted palace of 1846, in having fair play for their industries. At present, they are told that there cannot be any distress among them, because pauperism is not increasing. I never heard such an argument as that produced on a Conservative platform. If you want to be told that nothing will be done for the working classes until they are registered as paupers, it appears to me that one has to go to the so-called Liberals. Now, Sir, I think that is a most cruel and a most delusive and misleading test to apply to them. Before the working man subjects himself to what he considers, and I think rightly considers, the great disaster of going to the workhouse for food or for shelter, he will pass through such depths of suffering as few can have any conception of. He will part with everything—with his clothing, with his furniture, with the very bed on which he sleeps, and when everything is gone—when he sees that all is over—not a few of them have turned round and calmly faced the most terrible of deaths—death by starvation—rather than go to the workhouse, and bring this disgrace upon themselves and their children. Is that a spirit which should be taken advantage of by any Party or any Government in this country? Should it be laid down as a settled principle that nothing shall be done for the working classes, and that it shall not be admitted that their trades are depressed until they are registered as paupers? All I can say is, that any Party or any Government which takes its stand on principles of that sort is doomed already, and mankind will pronounce that it deserved its fate. All the political nostrums and quack remedies it can invent will not save it. I have addressed thousands of working men—cotton operatives, and others—on this subject, and I know their feeling well. Their industries are in a depressed state. In the very borough which I represent the working men are in a condition which I do not hesitate to describe as most anxious, even if not highly alarming. Go from London—from the theorists, the philosophers, the statisticians, and the wise men who tell us there is no depression, and that it is all imagination, and in a few hours you may find yourselves in the district represented by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), where some mills are actually falling into ruin, or in other places where the operatives have been put on short time. These are things which bring visibly before our eyes the depression of trade existing in the country, and make us confident that the men engaged in these trades will not submit for ever to be ruled by *doctrinaire* theories, or be told, as they are in the passage which I read from the speech of the hon. Member for Southwark (Mr. Thorold Rogers), that the main industries of the country are unaffected by depression. Sir, the main industries of the country are deeply affected by depression at this moment. I am aware that I ought not to address the House at this length; but my apology must be the extremely complicated and difficult nature of the subject. I should not feel that I had done my duty if I did not candidly produce the list of articles on which I think a duty would be levied, and could be levied, without the slightest injury to any class in this country. It is, of course, only a partial list of our imports of foreign manufactured goods. The figures which I propose to give are from the Board of Trade Returns. Taking the Returns of 1884, which is the last year accessible to me—I suppose we shall get those for 1885 about Christmas—I find that we imported into this country foreign silk manufactures to the value of £10,984,073; the woollen goods imported from abroad were £8,712,032; cotton, £2,669,460; iron and steel, £2,693,422; leather, £2,234,969; alkali and chemical manufactures, £2,204,196; embroidery, cordage, and other articles, £3,125,163; glass, £1,615,716; paper, £1,403,446; iron in bars, £1,165,948; clocks and watches, £1,043,263; furniture, £1,024,888; lace, £930,890; linen manufactures, £537,339; unenumerated manufactured goods, £6,305,730, making a total of £46,650,535. These are foreign manufactured goods, every article of which we can make quite cheap enough for the supply of our own people. Upon them I would place a duty calculated at about one-third, on the average, of the various protective duties imposed by foreign countries on our own goods. Twenty per cent would produce £9,330,000; [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt): Hear, hear!] The Chancellor of the Exchequer is evidently very grateful to me for desiring to make him a present of £9,330,000; and I am not surpised at his gratitude, when I know that he has been obliged this year to resort to the humiliating device of suspending the Sinking Fund in order to raise a paltry £500,000. Therefore, when I propose to make him a present of over £9,000,000 I am not astonished at the effusive nature of his gratitude. I venture to suggest that a portion of this money might be devoted to the reduction of the duties on tea, coffee, cocoa, and other articles in daily use among the working men. Although the amount I have stated was received with derisive cheers from the officials on the Treasury Bench, yet it may be known—I suppose it must be known to any Chancellor of the Exchequer—that it considerably exceeds the amount of the proceeds of all the duties on tea, coffee, cocoa, dried fruits, and other articles which are used so much in the daily life of the working classes. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer considers this amount so contemptible, let him take it and remit the duties which press so heavily on the working men. The duty on tea, for instance, amounts to 25 per cent, and to 20 per cent on other articles in daily use by the working men. The amount raised by all the duties on tea, coffee, cocoa, raisins, currants, and similar articles, is £5,138,797. Therefore, we might take off all these unnecessary burdens and have a handsome margin left of £4,000,000, which would save us from the necessity of falling back upon the Sinking Fund to make up the inevitable deficit in next year's Budget. Now, Sir, this is the proposition which I venture most respectfully to submit to the House. I thank hon. Members for the patience with which they have listened to me, and I appeal to them not to condemn my proposition offhand on account of what has been said upon it by somebody else at some other time. I trust that they will, at least, consider the arguments which I have put before them. Especially I beg that they will give heed to the earnest appeals which come to them from working men, and will do whatever may be possible to assist the great industries in which they are engaged, and to avert the great and unmerited sufferings which are now impending over their heads. Sir, I beg to move the Resolution.

SIR CUNLIFFE BROOKS (Cheshire, Altrincham), in rising to second the Motion, said, the time was when he would not have done so, because it contained matter which was inconsistent with that following of Free Trade which had always been one of the persistent objects of his life. In his youth he was told by Mr. Cobden, to whose friendship he had the privilege of being admitted, that Free Trade was one of the greatest possible benefits that could be conferred upon any nation. He had held that view all his life long, and he had looked with hope to see the time when we should receive the benefits of Free Trade. He was quite sure that he still was, and that he would ever remain, a firm and consistent believer in the principles of Free Trade. He had seen with satisfaction the great sacrifices that had been made by this nation to become practical Free Traders; but though those sacrifices had been great, he was confident they would be recompensed if, having made them, a system of sound Free Trade were universally established. But a long time had passed since we began to make sacrifices; and he wanted to know how long we were to continue making sacrifices, when we saw, as plainly as possible, all the other nations of the world refusing to join with us in this hunt after that Free Trade which we all desired? But we had not got it. Free Trade consisted of free buying and free selling. Free buying we had got, but free selling we could not, because other nations refused to receive within their territories the goods that we sent to them. Free Trade was a very pretty game to play at if all the players would observe the rules. We did; but other countries did not, and that was the cause of our bad trade. The prosperity of the country depended upon its labour. We allowed other nations to freely compete their labour with ours; but other nations did not allow the products of our labours to go into their territories and compete with theirs. What, then, ought to be done in the altered circumstances of the case? We ought to reconsider our position. That, he believed, would be the advice of Cobden himself had he been spared to witness the failure of his bright anticipations. We had waited long enough for Free Trade, and should wait no longer—not that he should object to waiting if delay did not cause suffering to thousands of our fellow-countrymen. He waited for the realization of another dream—the prevalence of universal peace; he wrote for it, he spoke for it, he hoped for it; but he did not object to waiting for that, because by so doing he did no harm to any mortal man. But by waiting for Free Trade which never came they inflicted an infinity of suffering upon their fellow-subjects. Cobden said—"Wait for five years, by which time all the nations of the earth will have become Free Traders;" but nearly 10 times that period had passed since the utterance of that prophecy, and it was still unfulfilled. If we saw that there was no probability of foreign nations following our good example, ought we not, as sensible men, to take our own action in the matter? He would put a duty upon all commodities where the labour of the foreigner entered into competition with the labour of Englishmen, excepting always raw material —such as jute, silk, and the like—and that article of universal consumption—corn. The people had said—"Thou shalt not put a tax upon corn;" and no Minister would ever dare to commit the crime involved in its taxation. Besides, there was the echo found in the breasts of everyone to the most beautiful sentiment uttered by the lamented Sir Robert Peel. The words were engraven on his statue in Manchester—

> "It may be that I should leave a name sometime remembered by expressions of goodwill in the abodes of those whose lot it is to labour and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow, when they recruit their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed food—the sweeter because it is no longer leavened by a sense of injustice."

Whilst, then, the English language endured it would be considered a crime to put a tax on corn. He would be told that if our domestic industries were protected many necessary articles would be made dearer. Our steam engines, our doors and windows would be a little dearer. He knew that that would be the result; but surely they would all gladly pay a little more when, with the extra cost, would come the grand satisfaction of knowing that the wages earned in the manufacture of these articles had gone into the pockets of British workmen, and were spent in the neighbourhood where the workmen resided. As matters were at present we sent hundreds of millions every year across the sea to swell the gains of the foreigner, and we never had any of the money back. Money was the life blood of a nation. Here we were letting it go too fast; we were bleeding ourselves to death. It was better to pay a little dearer for commodities than to be forced to find employment for thousands of unemployed workmen. In Manchester the unemployed were even at that moment demanding the erection of public works, for which the taxpayers would have to pay. He desired to knock down that idol of the Cobden Club called cheapness. Cheapness was not the only desirable thing. Employment was better —content and happiness were better. Several millions were spent annually in the purchase of manufactured silks coming from abroad. What a different state of things there would be in the East End of London and in the Northern districts if only half the sum so spent could find its way into the pockets of British workmen. When the imposed duties were first taken off, thousands of manufacturers and merchants were ruined, and thousands of working men were brought to destitution. It was thought that the foreigner would follow our example by abolishing his import duties; but he did not, and would not, do it. The time had come when we ought to revise our fiscal system thoroughly, taking an independent course. The reason why the members of the Cobden Club remained uninfluenced by the arguments against the continuance of our Free Trade system was that their feelings would be hurt by the admission of the failure of their doctrine. Saying, "Wait, and trust in Free Trade," they posed as soothsayers and oracles, careless of the injury done to the industries of the country. Recognizing that "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick," and seeing no probability of the realization of the Freetraders' anticipations, he trusted that the House would agree to the Motion of his hon. Friend.

Amendment proposed,

> To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, it is expedient to raise a larger portion of the Revenue of the Country from Import Duties, and that such Duties should be levied on certain descriptions of fully manufactured Foreign goods, entering into competition with similar goods of our own make; and that the Revenue so obtained should be applied to the reduction of the Duties on tea, coffee, and cocoa, and of other burdensome imposts,"—(*Mr. Jennings*,)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.), who had given Notice of the following Amendment:—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, any proposal to revert to the old and discarded

> policy of Protection is misleading and mischievous in its tendency, and opposed to the best interests of the trade and commerce of the Country, and injurious to the welfare of the working classes,"

said, he was anxious that this question should be debated on its merits, as it had been dangled before their eyes on several occasions. He approached this subject from the standpoint of British working men, among whom he had lived and been associated with all his life, and of whom he was one now. It was very gratifying to hear from hon. Gentlemen opposite of the interest they took in the British working man. But it was a striking fact that of the 10 or 12 Members of that House who most distinctly represented the working classes not one could be found who would support such a Motion as this. So far as he knew the views of his hon. Friends, they were all on one side in this controversy. He was not a Free Trader because Free Trade was the policy of the Liberal Party, for if he felt that the opposite policy would benefit the working classes, he would, irrespective of Party, go for the protection of native industry. He was a Member of the Liberal Party because Free Trade was one of the cardinal points in its policy. He was a Cobdenite not merely because he believed in Free Trade in imports and exports, but because he believed in the whole of the large-hearted policy of that large-hearted man. The reason that the country had not yet obtained all the advantages and the blessings of Free Trade was because it had as yet only adopted a portion of that policy—that portion dealing with free imports—but had not yet crowned the edifice and secured the advantages of Free Trade in land. When hon. Gentlemen supported this, then he would have more faith in their professions of regard for the welfare of the working classes. It was said by hon. Gentlemen opposite that the democracy desired to see the imposition of import duties; but that he entirely denied. It was also said that if the labourers obtained their three acres and a cow, or their 12 acres and two cows, which would be better still, they would all become Protectionists. He was quite willing to run the risk of this. The hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Jennings) had referred to America; but that was scarcely a happy instance, for America had at present her hands full of industrial difficulties — difficulties, however, which he sincerely hoped she might surmount. Whatever view they might take with regard to her industries, or Free Trade, or Protection, it was sufficient for him to know that, so far as this country was concerned, it would be perilous in the extreme, and absolutely ruinous, to attempt to reverse the policy of Free Trade, even if the path on which they had started was wrong. It was, therefore, most injudicious and mischievous to dangle before the masses of this country the policy of Protection; for hon. Members on the other side of the House must know full well that it was now impossible for us to retrace our steps. Why did not the Conservative Party, during the five years it was in Office, from 1874 to 1879, attempt to do so if it was possible? During those years the exports fell, year by year, to an extent never witnessed in recent years. They began to fall when the Tory Government came into Office, and they continued to fall during the five years of Tory Government, only, in fact, beginning to retrieve their position when the Liberal Government came into Office in 1880. Yet the Conservative Government never made a step in the direction of Protection. They would find that the export of British and Irish goods in the last five years had increased by an average of £32,799,219 annually. Surely, as a matter of common-sense, if trade and industry were reviving to such an extent as they had done during the last five years, that could not be an argument for the re-imposition of Customs Duties on imports. There was one statement of the hon. Member for Stockport which he thought was a curious one, if the hon. Member had read the Report of the Royal Commission on Trade in its fulness. The hon. Member had said that they had not increased their exports to America, from which they imported such a large proportion of goods. In point of fact, the exports to America from this country had increased. Thirty years ago their exports to America had been £21,000,000, whereas it now amounted to £28,000,000. This whole question was a very wide and complicated one, and one in which he took considerable interest, because of his connection and association with working men. The hon. Member for

Stockport had said that the textile industries in this country were in a sadly debilitated state.

Mr. JENNINGS: What I said was that they were not flourishing in proportion to the increase of our population.

Mr. HOWELL admitted that the trade of this country in many respects was not in that condition in which they would like to see it, and they would be glad to have a return to the condition of affairs that existed in 1872 and 1873. That, however, was hardly a fair way of looking at the question; what they had to deal with was the current of trade over a given number of years, and he disputed the correctness of an estimate drawn merely from this year or that year instead of a period of years. There had never been a time of greater depression and of misery to working men, except before the introduction of Free Trade, than the period of 1878-9, when trade had gone down and down in almost all respects. During the five years of Tory rule, when they had had the opportunity of dealing with this question from their own stand-point, they had imported more silk goods in the gross than in the last five years. But taking the current trade over a number of years, he maintained that progress had been continuous, with the exception of the period from 1875 to 1879, when the Tory Party was in power. During the last five years the excess of our exports of iron manufactures over the preceding five years amounted to close on £37,000,000, and in steam-engines, machinery, and other mill work alone, the increase was close on £20,000,000; and there was this singular fact—that while they were complaining of the import of foreign manufactured goods, how did the foreigner manufacture these goods? By the latest and best possible machinery made in this country, that formed one of the stable exports of this country. If hon. Members wanted to deal effectually with this question, and were to put an embargo on manufactures from abroad, they had better stop the engines and machinery made in this country for exportation, and which go from England to the Continent, and stop the emigration of English artizans. They could no more do the one than the other. As to the shipping trade of this country, those who spoke about its going to the dogs did not know anything about the statistics of the case. The truth was, that there was scarcely a single industry that did not show an improvement in its export trade during the last five years. Nearly every ship that came into their ports, whether under a British or foreign flag, went out again loaded with a greater tonnage than that with which she arrived. What did that mean? That she took away more goods than she brought. He challenged the accuracy of the hon. Member's figures as to raw materials. They must not forget, when they examined English trade, that other countries developed as well as this; and, although a patriotic Englishman, he ventured to rejoice that other countries were advancing in civilization. But he did not think there was cause for anxiety. He knew there was a fall in prices; and if by any reasonable means they could increase the prices without injuring the great masses of the people, he should be glad to see it done. Cheapness of production was not everything. Some of the things from which they suffered came directly from the manufacturers, and some of those who were called political economists, who had had too great a belief in the cheapness of production. There were other things which ought to be considered; and if English manufacturers had paid more attention to the quality of their products they would not have suffered so severely. They flooded foreign markets some years ago with inferior goods until shiploads of their goods rotted in foreign and Colonial ports, because they would not unship them. They sent so much of this shoddy material of one kind or another abroad that people began to think that they had better pay a higher price for home manufacture. The subject of technical education had been talked and inquired about for a long time, but nothing had been done for it. Our workmen were expected to compete with all the world; but they were not taught how to do it. He urged that something should be done in this direction. What he desired was that something should be done so as to bring home to our artizans quicker and better methods of production, so that in design, quality, beauty, and finish we should be able to compete with all quarters of the world. Another thing from which the trade of the country had suffered were the high railway rates; and he was glad the Government were hastening on a solution of that question. Then there was the question of mining rents and royalties, in which his hon. Friend beside him (Mr. Mason) took an interest. The truth was, that the capital of this country was locked up in too few hands, and ought to be employed in more numerous channels. But a return to more prosperous times was certainly not to be secured by the re-imposition of protective tariffs.

Mr. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham) said, he thought no one could ignore the fact that this subject interested the constituencies of this country more keenly perhaps than any other question. He did not speak of the new agricultural constituencies, whose Representatives, as they heard the other day, were busy tasting samples of adulterated beer; but any one who had experience of the politics of large towns must be perfectly aware that when all other subjects failed the mere mention of our fiscal policy always exacted the greatest interest and attention. He was not prepared to admit that what were called the "labour" Members in that House represented, in any peculiar degree, or spoke with any special mandate from the labouring classes in this country. Who sat for the large towns in this House? The Representatives of the large industrial centres were on the Opposition Benches, not the Ministerial. ["Oh!"] Was it not so? How, then, about London? How about Liverpool, Sheffield, Oldham, Stockport, Manchester, and Leeds? How about Lancashire? The Radicals were driven out of the large towns to the uttermost parts of the country. Liberal candidates had been rejected by the great working-class constituencies, and had been forced to take refuge in the bowels of the earth—in the mines of Cornwall, in the Islands and Highlands of Scotland, in the barns and farmyards of that which its own Representatives had pictured as a beery Bœotia. He had had, unfortunately for himself, a considerable experience and a pretty long apprenticeship as a Metropolitan candidate, and had invariably found that the intelligent working man of London, at any rate, was by no means satisfied with our present tariff system, and regarded it with suspicion and misgiving. A large proportion condemned it, and they all, irrespective of Party, regarded it with an open mind and as an arguable question. The mental attitude of the working classes upon this question contrasted very favourably with that of gentlemen in high places—Cabinet and ex-Cabinet Ministers, writers of leading articles, and members of the Cobden Club, who from mere cowardice and laziness intrenched themselves behind a formula adopted 40 years ago under totally different conditions of production. He must exempt from the category of cowards and laggards the hon. Member for Bermondsey (Mr. Thorold Rogers), who, whatever his errors might be, certainly could not be accused of either cowardice or want of industry. As a matter of fact, nothing was more unhistorical or more unscientific than the attempt to exalt the doctrine of free imports into the regions of natural laws or self-evident propositions. It was thoroughly unhistorical, because we had only been a free-trading nation for the past 40 years; and it was most thoroughly unscientific, because the principle of political economy depended entirely upon the circumstances of the society to which the application was proposed. The history of Free Trade was not at all, as the hon. Member for Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell) seemed to imagine, creditable to the Whigs or to the Liberal Party. The statesmen in the last century whose names were associated with Free Trade were Lord Bolingbroke and Mr. Pitt, and the opponents of the Commercial Clauses of the Treaty of Utrecht were Sir Robert Walpole and his friends. The opponent of the Commercial Treaty with France was Mr. Fox. The manufacturing classes placed themselves at the head of the movement from which they had derived all the advantage, while all the risk and sacrifice was bound to fall upon the landed classes. It was his opinion that if this country had retained low duties, instead of abolishing free duties, they would, as Greville had said in his Memoirs, have been felt by nobody, and they might have been raised at any moment if the Revenue required it. The history of Free Trade did not show the movement to be any monopoly of the Liberal Party. The truths of political economy, as he had said, depended entirely upon the condition of the society to which it was proposed to apply them. Forty years ago England enjoyed a virtual monopoly of manufactures. We wanted corn, and we knew that other countries must come to us for goods in payment for their corn. But all this had been changed. Other nations had borrowed our capital to make their railways; they had learnt our language, and stolen our patents, and copied our processes. They now ran us neck and neck in every market of the world. The electric telegraph and the adoption of a gold standard by Germany had simply revolutionized the banking business of the world; and, therefore, he said, it was perfectly impossible to maintain, from a logical point of view, that the fiscal system which was good for the country 40 years ago was good for the country at the present day. His idea of a sound commercial policy was a policy based on mutual concessions and mutual advantages—concessions and advantages to be secured, not by Cobden Club essays, but, if necessary, by a tit for tat tariff, and to be embodied in Commercial Treaties. The policy of Commercial Treaties was practised, and successfully practised, every day upon the Continent and in the United States. It was practised successfully between Spain and the United States in 1867, and between Spain and Germany in 1883. He would like to ask the House what more ridiculous result could have happened to this country than that which befel us when Mr. Cobden's Commercial Treaty expired in 1880? We sent over to Paris the right hon. Baronet the Member for Chelsea and a packet of Cobden Club essays. The Parisians received them both with civility; but the result of it all was not a happy one. He did not rise to submit the Motion or the Amendment to an exhaustive analysis. He was very much afraid that the House was thoroughly debauched by the absinthe of Repeal, and was not in the condition to go deeply into this or any other question; but he rose for the purpose of showing the absurdity of treating this as a closed question, and to express his conviction that there was no subject in which the artizans of our large towns were more deeply interested, and that there was no result which they could more legitimately claim from their Representatives than this—that, as far as commercial legislation was concerned, they should be placed upon equal terms of competition with their foreign rivals.

Mr. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire) said, the question of Free Trade had often been discussed in that House, and always with one result. He did not think that the result of that debate would differ from the result of similar debates in the past. There was no use blinking or disguising the fact that the trade of the country had lost its elasticity. In nearly every branch profits were very small; in some of them a large amount of trade was done without profit; the status of the working class was being lowered, and there were larger bodies of men unemployed, or partly employed, at the present moment than was the case 10 or 15 years ago. In these circumstances, it was not surprising that the attention of the House was frequently called to the subject. But, granted that we were suffering from long-continued and severe depression, were other countries, which had adhered to protective tariffs, any better off than we were? There had been labour riots in the United States, resulting from the same congestion of labour that there was here. There had been great depression in the iron and glass trades of Belgium; and there had been great distress in Belgium, in France, and in the United States. The strongest upholders of the protective system had been France and the United States, and they did not appear to have derived much benefit from it. The United States and France had plausible excuses for a policy of Protection, because they had something to protect—undeveloped manufactures, which, without some protection, would be exposed to fierce competition. The United States produced all the necessaries of life, and only exported its surplus of food. France produced nearly all her own food. The peculiar position of England was that her people depended upon a large importation of food and of raw materials, and there were no means of paying for them except by exports. To us, therefore, Free Trade was a matter of life and death. We had practically to import the food of one-half the population—of from 15,000,000 to 18,000,000 of people; and we had also to import the raw materials for the greater part of our manufactures. For the enormous import of food and of raw materials, amounting to about £300,000,000 sterling, we had no means of paying except by our manufactured goods. It was essential that we should be large exporters and the cheapest producers; and, unless we were the cheapest producers, our position was one of great danger. It was said we imported £2,000,000 worth of cotton goods; but we exported somewhere about £60,000,000 worth. The cotton trade depended for its existence upon our being the cheapest producers, and being able to control the foreign markets. It was the fact that we were the cheapest producers that enabled us to control the markets of India, China, South America, and Africa. In all these markets we had absolute Free Trade, or, at all events, the benefit of the Most Favoured Nation Clause, and we were, therefore, unaffected by competition. The amount of trade with those markets carried off by other countries was a mere bagatelle compared with our own. It was quite true that we were losing trade with the protected countries of the Continent and with the United States; but we were gaining trade with the British Colonies and in neutral markets. We did not possess the means of improving our position by altering our commercial policy. No doubt, our import of foreign manufactured goods, about £46,000,000 worth, was too large; and it was to be regretted that our manufacturers should not be able to reduce it by competition; but if we were to place the duties suggested upon that £46,000,000 worth of goods, what would be the effect? No doubt for a time we should give a stimulus to the trades of this country that are competed with now; for a short time there would be more profit and a greater employment of labour; but the ultimate effect would be to raise the cost of production in this country generally, and when that was done we should lessen our trade with the other countries of the world. That we should lose the command of the great neutral markets would be the inevitable effect of any policy of that kind. It was, therefore, to us a matter of life and death that we should be the cheapest producers. Still, the question arose—Why was it that other countries were able to send us any manufactured goods? Why were Belgium and France able to send us silk and woollen and iron goods? It arose from two causes. The first was that other countries had cheaper labour and longer hours of work than we had; and the second was that by the spread of technical education they had discovered finer and better processes than we had. Our remedy was to out-trump them by discovering still finer and better processes. This country was the storehouse of mechanical invention, genius, and contrivance; and it was our own fault if we permitted any foreign country to get an advantage over us by technical superiority. As to the wages and hours of other countries, the fact that the wages were lower and the hours longer at all events constituted a caution to our artizans and Trade Unions not to press their claims too far. He viewed with the greatest satisfaction the increased comfort of the working classes, and there was nothing he desired more ardently to promote; but we could not shut our eyes to the fact that we were exposed to risk in competing with countries where men worked 15 hours per week longer, and were content with 30 per cent lower wages. It was possible to kill the goose that laid the golden egg. If we lost any trade from these causes it would be difficult to recover it. No doubt this country suffered from the protective policy of other countries in recent years. It was admitted that many Cobdenite prognostications had not been realized; but there were no means by which we could affect the reactionary policy of other countries. We might, perhaps, have gained certain advantages if we had retained the power of negotiation. We might at one time have insisted upon Free Trade in the Colonies and throughout the British Empire; but the day for doing it was past, for the great Colonies were virtually independent, and we could influence them by persuasion only. The population of this country was growing with rapidity, while its trade was not. We raised less food to-day in this country than we did 20 or 30 years ago. There were now more than 30,000,000 of population to support in Great Britain, one-half of whom were supported by the importation of foreign food. The increase in our population was going on at a rapid rate; and it became a serious question to consider the wants of our large towns, where millions of people were underfed, and where employment was inadequate. The remedy which he would venture to suggest was in this direction. We possessed a Colonial Empire 60 times larger than the United

Kingdom. In England we had 450 persons to the square mile, a considerable portion of whom were on the verge of starvation; in Australia, on the other hand, there was but one person to the square mile. What was the natural remedy in the circumstances? Surely it was to be found in some steps being taken to remove our congested population to some of those more favourably situated Colonies. Unless we adopted some course of this kind he foresaw increasing labour difficulties in all our large towns, with the concomitant spread of Socialism. For these difficulties he could see no remedy, except that of spreading our large and growing population over the vast area of our Colonies. There was one chief cause for the terrible cloud of depression which hung over, not only the United Kingdom, but Europe and America as well. There was surely something wrong in the commercial system. This state of things had now existed for many years. Nothing like it had been seen since the gloomy days previous to the repeal of the Corn Laws. What was the chief feature of this remarkable state of things? It was the astonishing fall of prices, which had been perfectly unexampled in their time. He had taken great pains to investigate this question; and he could assure the House that the average prices now existing in this country, the United States, France, and elsewhere were about 40 per cent lower than was the case 10 or 15 years ago. This had an immense effect upon the traders of the country, because it might be truly said that a very large portion of the trade of this country was virtually bankrupt just now. The real owner of commercial plant in this country at the present time might be said to be the mortgagee. Nothing could be more discouraging to industry, because this state of things really put an end to all enterprize. This was the condition of affairs just now in the United States, in England, France, Belgium, and to a less extent in Germany. There must be some common cause for this condition of things; and he believed, after much study of the question, that the main cause was to be found in the foolish and reckless monetary changes which had expelled one-half of the money of the world from its proper use, and which had thrown the business operations almost exclusively on the other half. The result was that they had these falling prices. By this change, too, they had transferred a great portion of the property of the country from the hard-working toiling classes to the idle money-lending classes. If they wished to get rid of this disease of depression they must get rid of their absurd and foolish monetary policy. Let them go back to the position held by Europe up to 1873, and he believed the effect would be a remarkable resuscitation of industy.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) said, he must compliment the hon. Member for Camberwell (Mr. Baumann) upon the felicity and the charm of his speech; but he could not help remembering that the 400 majority by which the hon. Member had secured his seat was due not to the intelligent interest which the English artizans took in the fiscal affairs of their country, but to the Irish vote. Neither could he help recollecting that when, during the end of the last and the beginning of the present year, money was so cheap that it could be borrowed at 2 per cent, thousands of acres of land were lying unproductive, while 20,000 dock labourers in London alone were starving. Some references had been made to the voluminous evidence taken before the Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade; but it was only fair that that evidence should be taken as a whole, and not treated in a piecemeal fashion. As a Member of that Commission, he might mention some of the facts that had come out in evidence. It was shown that there was unused capital, unused land, and workers idle by the thousand; that in agricultural districts the farmers' profits were swallowed up by landlords' rents; in mining districts depression was caused by the royalties to the lords of the soil swallowing up the profits of the mines; and, again, in the large centres of commercial industry, the system of ground rents to wealthy landlords made it hard for the industrial population to live—and those who were in work were earning what was hardly sufficient to keep body and soul together—and went far to explain the depression which existed. These facts ought not to be forgotten in discussing a subject of this kind. Under those circumstances, the evidence would bear a very different interpretation to that which it had been sought to place upon it.

MR. BAKER (Somerset, Frome) said, that the subject brought forward by the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Jennings) had been placed before the House by him in a most taking form. The proposal was, in fact, to raise taxation on certain foreign manufactures for the implied purpose of benefiting the labourers of this country. The hon. Member had made a great deal of the fact that while the United States imported £86,000,000 worth of produce into this country we, in return, only exported £24,000,000 in the year to America. The difference of £62,000,000 the hon. Member treated as being a direct loss to this country; but while the Americans did not make us a present of that sum, we certainly did not pay for it in specie. The hon. Member must be acquainted with the fact that specie was not paid for those American imports, and that if our exports did not go to the United States directly they went indirectly. The prosperity which this country enjoyed under Free Trade was shown by the Returns of the Savings Banks, which represented the savings of the working classes. In 1846 the amount of money in the Savings Banks was about £46,000,000, while, at the present day, it had increased to £95,000,000. With largely increased wages, and with a greatly diminished price of articles of consumption, it could not be denied that the condition of the labouring classes had very considerably improved. Directly we placed a duty on foreign manufactured goods we should raise the prices of those goods; and, whatever might be the opinion of the hon. Member for Stockport, who claimed to represent a working-class constituency, he begged to say that, in his own constituency, the classes who worked in the mills were all agreed that Free Trade was absolutely essential to their well-being. An import duty would, no doubt, benefit the manufacturer; but it would certainly be detrimental to the labourer, since it would be impossible to tax manufacturing imports without taxing agricultural imports. That would, of course, put a tax upon food; and he should be surprised if the constituents of the hon. Member allowed him to advocate that. The hon. Member had spoken about the increase in the numbers of people who were employed in American textile manufactures; but he believed it would be found that the increase of population in America during the same period was in excess ratio to the increased numbers employed in those manufactures. The Seconder of the Resolution (Sir Cunliffe Brooks) was a gentleman connected with banking, and, therefore, well acquainted with all subjects relating to finance. The hon. Member said—"We throw hundreds of millions away every year, and never see them again." He believed the House would agree with him that that was a very startling statement. Where did the hundreds of millions come from, and where did they go to? He thought the hon. Member would find that there was more money in the banks, and more in the pockets of the people, than at any former period. In conclusion, he would observe that although he admired many of the pamphlets of the hon. Member for Flint (Mr. Samuel Smith), he entirely differed from that hon. Gentleman on the question of bimetallism.

MR. JAMES MACLEAN (Oldham) said, that while he was unable to support the Motion of his hon. Friend the Member for Stockport (Mr. Jennings), he was at issue with hon. Members on the other side of the House as to the facts of the present situation. The speech to which they had just listened was conceived much on the same lines as that of the hon. Member for Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell), and the hon. Gentleman seemed to him to deny that any great and unparalleled depression of trade existed at the present time. He was glad to notice, however, that the last speaker did not infuse into his remarks that bitterness of Party and class feeling which, unfortunately, disfigured the speech of the hon. Member for Bethnal Green. With regard to the question whether there was any real and serious depression existing in the country at the present moment, he should like to cite one witness who would have been accepted not long ago by all Members on the other side of the House as a witness of unimpeachable authority. Early this Session the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, at that time President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Chamberlain), in a very sound and admirable speech, spoke on a Motion brought forward by the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. R. Dawson) with regard to Harbours of Refuge, and on that occasion he described the results of inquiries he had made in regard to the condition of the working classes throughout the country, and he admitted that there was a great deal of distress existing among the better class of artizans, which could not, and did not, come under the notice of the Boards of Guardians. He said he knew nothing more admirable than the way in which the more respectable of the working classes shrank from having recourse to the Poor Law for help in their difficulties, undergoing, as they did, great hardship and privation, and almost starvation, rather than have recourse to what they considered to be a degradation. The right hon. Gentleman confessed that the distress amongst the classes to which he referred was considerable, and that, unless there was a speedy diminution in the distress, it would be a serious matter for the consideration of the House what steps should be taken in the matter. Now, that was the opinion only a short time ago of a distinguished Member of the Liberal Party, who was, until recently, a Member of the Liberal Government, of the condition of the trade and commerce of the country. Such was the state of the country after five years of Liberal rule; and it was a complete answer to the statement of the hon. Member for Bethnal Green, that whenever the Liberals came into Office the trade and industry of the country at once began to improve. Now, not only did the depression of which the right hon. Gentleman spoke exist at that time, but it had since increased, as anybody who moved about in the manufacturing districts must know very well; and if hon. Members on the other side of the House had moved about in the manufacturing districts as he (Mr. Maclean) had, they would also know that there was a strong feeling amongst the working classes of those districts that foreign competition had a great deal to do with the depression of trade. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Well, he knew that the feeling prevailed, to a large extent, amongst the working classes. He was not one of those who thought that was a feeling which ought to be encouraged by proposals to put taxes on the importation of foreign manufactures into this country. When people were out of employment and trade was bad their imagination was apt to be captivated by all sorts of schemes for the improvement of their condition. Most men were by nature Protectionists; and it required a strong and sustained effort, not only of the reason, but of the will, to confirm them in their faith in Free Trade. Persons engaged in daily labour had not the time or the opportunity to study the question deeply; and it was not unnatural that, in times of depression, they should think that relief was to be obtained by shutting out foreign manufactures. For himself, however, he did not think the proposal of the hon. Member for Stockport would have the result desired. His hon. Friend had suggested that the United States were prospering at our expense in the neutral markets of the world, in spite of their having a protective tariff. He believed that we had a stronger hold on the neutral markets of the world than any other competing countries, whether they were Free Trade or Protectionist. But, of course, the advantages in competition which we secured by Free Trade might be counterbalanced by other circumstances. It might be that other countries, where the cost of the raw material was smaller, or the markets nearer, or where the hours of labour were longer, might be able to force their goods into neutral markets in spite of Free Trade; but should we gain any advantage by abandoning Free Trade and increasing the cost of production to our producers at home? He certainly did not think that we should. The question was often asked, What country was prospering by Free Trade? He did not know of any country in the world which was prospering at the present time more than India was doing—she was enjoying considerable prosperity—and that was because India enjoyed the benefits of absolute Free Trade under British rule. His hon. Friend had drawn a distinction between consumers and producers which, to his (Mr. Maclean's) mind, involved a great fallacy. He said producers were not to be sacrificed in the interests of the consumers. But in England we were both producers and consumers, and especially we were consumers of foreign food and raw material; and it was a perfect fallacy to draw distinctions between the two classes. The great object which we should all have in view, in order to secure the prosperity of the industrial classes, should be to enable them to produce home manufactures at the lowest possible cost; and he would ask how was it possible we could produce at the lowest cost unless we had Free Trade for raw materials? His hon. Friend had been good enough to refer to the borough which he (Mr. Maclean) had the honour to represent—the borough of Oldham—as being in great distress. The state of things in Oldham, he regretted to say, was very distressing indeed. He acknowledged that the spinning trade, of which Oldham was the headquarters, was very much distressed, and far from satisfactory. At no time were the Oldham people more gloomy about their prospects. The witnesses who were examined before the Royal Commissioners on Trade Depression all agreed that at no previous time within their recollection were the profits on the manufacture of yarn in this country so small as at the present time. But could his hon. Friend point to a scintilla of evidence given before the Commissioners about Oldham to the effect that the cause of the depression was due to the importation into England of foreign manufactured goods? There were many causes for the depression. There were many markets which now produced a great deal of yarn that could compete successfully with the goods exported from this country. In India, for example, many cotton mills had been set up, and they were able to produce cotton yarns cheaply, because they had the raw material at their very doors. They imported coal from England at a very low rate; freights were cheap, labour was plentiful and cheap, and they got out the latest and most improved machinery at a cheap rate, and they acquired skilled supervision from managers from this country. Moreover, the superiority of manufacturing skill, which had hitherto given us a great advantage over competing countries, was constantly being diminished; and in India, also, there was a steady depreciation in the value of silver, which gave to the manufacturers of yarn and cloth in India a great advantage over the manufacturers in this country in the competition of yarns and cloth. Now these, he considered, were among the chief causes which contributed to the depression of trade in Lancashire. Now, he would ask, what would be the advantage of imposing a large import duty upon silk and other goods? He was not so strong a Free Trader as not to say that retaliation should be applied within a narrow compass or field, over which we ourselves had complete control, so that, for instance, we might avenge ourselves upon Russia, who was doing all that she could to prevent our trading in the far East. He had made such a proposition in that House, and hon. Gentlemen on the Ministerial side had laughed at the idea. That was a case where Protection might be resorted to with advantage; but the complexities of trade, industry, and commerce were so great and far-reaching in our trade with Europe that it would be impossible to adopt retaliation in some cases and not in others—to make bargains here and not in other cases without its having a retro-active effect on our own industries. He would take one instance in proof of this assertion. It would be remembered that the Commercial Treaty which Mr. Cobden negotiated with the Emperor Napoleon III. was announced with a great flourish of trumpets. In the Chief Secretary for Ireland's (Mr. John Morley's) interesting history of *The Life of Cobden* there was an account of the differences of opinion which prevailed between the Prime Minister (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) and Mr. Cobden, on the one hand, and the right hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) on the other, over the negotiations for the French Treaty. The right hon. Member for Birmingham thought it was our business to look solely to our own tariffs, without consideration for what France wanted in return. Mr. Cobden and the Prime Minister thought otherwise, and the Chief Secretary adopted their views. Commenting upon this difference of opinion, Mr. Morley remarked—

> "An economic principle in itself, as all sensible men have now learnt, can never be decisive of anything in the mixed and complex sphere of practice."

That was an expression of opinion which would justify, not only special bargains and arrangements with other countries—Treaties of Commerce and the like—but it involved also the policy of retaliation. Experience had proved that both Mr. Cobden and Mr. Gladstone were totally mistaken in their estimate of what the effect would be of the Treaty with France, and that their departure from sound principle in this instance had been indirectly injurious to British trade with other countries. The exceptionally favourable treatment which England accorded to French productions had caused great irritation to Spain, which had lasted for 30 years, and it was not until a few weeks ago that that irritation had been removed. That showed what great harm might arise out of this kind of bargaining, and how difficult it was to have a commercial policy favouring one country at the expense of others, which would not do more harm than good to ourselves. His hon. Friend (Mr. Jennings) proposed a duty of 20 per cent on silks imported from France and other countries. But, in a Report presented on the manufacturing industries of France, it appeared that the silk industry at Lyons was depressed and languishing owing to the competition of German silks in which there was a mixture of cotton. The Lyons manufacturers were imploring the French Government to do away with the heavy import duty on the yarn spun at Oldham, in order that they might work it into their silks. Thus the effect of his hon. Friend's proposal would probably be to deprive Oldham of a large foreign market for its yarns. That trade gave a great deal of employment; and if a tax were imposed upon French silks it would be the duty of the English Government to find the manufacturers of Oldham another market. His hon. Friend proposed to unite two incompatibles—he stated that by the proposals he brought forward he would give to the Chancellor of the Exchequer £9,250,000 of Revenue, arising from import duties upon foreign manufactured goods, and that he would, at the same time, revive British industry. Well, the fact was the hon. Member could not do both. If he raised the Revenue, then the foreign goods must still be imported, and British industry would not be benefited. If, on the other hand, the import duties were high enough to exclude foreign manufactures and transfer the trade into British hands, then there would be nothing left to collect Revenue upon. He might do one or the other; but if he did one he prevented the realization of the other. His main objection to his hon. Friend's proposal was that it was a return to the old vicious circle. It was impossible to impose any particular duty without giving other industries the right to demand the same treatment. Why should one particular industry be protected and another left out in the cold? An import duty on corn would be demanded, and with the best show of reason, because the agricultural interest was the largest in the country. It was impossible to draw a distinction on the ground of raw material, as corn was the result of labour as much as manufactured goods were. These were some of the reasons why he considered that it was his duty to vote against the proposal made by his hon. Friend the Member for Stockport.

Mr. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich) said, that the Legislature of this country was the most honest in the world; and that was so mainly because its Members had not the same temptations to overcome which beset the legislators of Protectionist countries. He could illustrate the truth of that statement by a reference to the business in which he was engaged. All the sulphur ore used in the alkali trade formerly came from Ireland. He thought an alkali maker did not require sulphur ore; and if a duty were put on sulphur ore from Spain sufficiently high to bring the Irish ore into use again, his business organization would make a profit of about £500,000 a-year thereby, and he could afford to offer huge bribes to Members to bring that about. He therefore conjured the House to oppose a Motion which would endanger the honour and purity of the Legislature.

Colonel BRIDGEMAN (Bolton) said, he would admit that a few years back the statesmen of this country need not have troubled their heads much about the employment of the people, because at that time labour had it all its own way. Things, however, had changed, and instead now of capital vying with capital to get labour, labour was vying with labour to get employment, and this would intensify as time went on, for the reason that the population of this country was increasing at the rate of between 200,000 and 300,000 a-year, and if we failed to get employment for our people now, how were we to do so in future years? The capitalist, whose capital consisted in gold, which was the accumulated labour of past years, cared very little how our Revenue was raised, whether from articles we could produce or not; but it was very different with the labouring man, whose whole capital consisted in his power to work. It was really a question of life or death with him whether he got employment for his labour, and, therefore, whether we raised revenue from articles which he produced or not. He protested against Gentlemen below the Gangway claiming to be the only Representatives of labour in the House. He claimed to be himself a Representative of labour, as he sat for a constituency of which the great majority were working men; and he could tell the House that the working men would not be satisfied until this question was thoroughly threshed out.

MR. JAMES ELLIS (Leicestershire, Bosworth) said, that every man who gave his mind to the thorough study of economic laws would see that for England, at least, the only chance was to continue in the path of Free Trade. There was a feeling in the House that the importation of manufactured goods into this country was necessarily an evil; but he believed that it was just as much a blessing as the introduction of food. The fact was that if they allowed the channel of trade to be free, men would only exchange goods one with another when there was a profit on the exchange; and it was just as good for us to import iron from Belgium, or manufactured cotton from the United States, as it was to import raw material. Did hon. Gentlemen think that the United States sent us a quantity of goods without getting paid for them? There were plenty of French cucumbers and other vegetables to be got in Covent Garden Market. Was it supposed that Frenchmen sent those goods without receiving goods in return? It was simply an easier way of producing what was wanted in this country. It was true that just now there was a very large excess of imports over exports; but those who had gone into the question knew that, taking a period of 10 years, the trade was balanced. In the first place, it was balanced by a certain amount of goods we sent to the States; in the second place, by the considerable number of interests paid on mortgage and railway stocks in America; and, in the third place, by the exports sent to India and China. What would become of our trade with India and China if it were not for the amount of goods which we imported from America? If we began Protection it must be practised all round. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Stockport had given an illustration of the need of Protection which came under his own observation. He (Mr. Ellis) would like the House to know how his own constituency was affected by the present condition of things. In London the authorities had wisely changed the method of making streets. They no longer put down blocks of granite, but asphalte which came from Switzerland, and timber which came from Norway. Neither the asphalte nor timber paid English duty; but by its use there had been displaced the labour of thousands of men in his constituency and in Wales and Scotland. If the other industries of the country were protected his constituents would come forward and say—"You shall not import timber; you shall not import asphalte; but you shall be compelled to use our granite." As the Representative of an agricultural constituency, he was amazed that the Mover of the Resolution proposed to leave agriculturists out of the question. If it was intended to raise the price of everything agriculturists used, surely it was proper to put a tax upon wheat. If he would tax anything at all, he would tax agricultural produce, the price of which had fallen to such an extent that we had a difficulty in competing with the rich land over the water. It was impossible to tax manufactured goods. He was a Free Trader, and he would do nothing of the sort. It was impossible to play with Protection. If adopted it must be adopted all round. A poor man, at one of the meetings he addressed on this question, told him a story which very aptly applied to this case. His friend told him that he went to the theatre in some agricultural town. The people in the front began to stand up, then the people at the back stood, then those in front stood upon the forms, whereupon the people at the back, in order to see better, stood upon the forms. In the end all the audience were standing on the forms, which led to the remark by someone present—"My friends, I think we had better all sit down, and then we shall just be where we began." If we taxed everything which we imported we should find more trouble in collecting the duty; but otherwise we should be just where we were before. There was in many parts of the country great depression of trade. There were two cures for it—one was to lessen the Expenditure of the country by at least £10,000,000 sterling, and the other was to use that £10,000,000 to extend emigration. By adopting remedies the burden which fell upon every man in the Realm would be decreased, and other customers would be created over the water. If he had his wish he would employ the ships now engaged in blocking the Greek ports in carrying emigrants to the fruitful shores of Western Australia.

Sir HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigton) said that, if he understood the argument of the hon. Member who had just spoken (Mr. Ellis), it was that in every period of 10 years matters righted themselves. But we were now coming to the end of a period of well-nigh 10 years. The present depression commenced about the year 1877 or 1878, and if things were to right themselves within 10 years a commencement must be made very soon. He had listened with attention and interest to the speech of the hon. Member for Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell), whose well-known experience of matters connnected with the working classes entitled his words to earnest consideration; but he could not see that he threw any particular light upon the subject. The hon. Member asked why Import Duties were not imposed on home manufactures; but the answer to that was that duties were imposed upon them by foreign countries. He would give the House an illustration of what occurred to a well-known firm of ironmasters in Glasgow. Like many other commercial firms in this country, they had been driven by the condition of trade in this country to set up a manufactory on the Continent; and they had occasion, at the beginning of the year, to send out an engine the cost of which in this country was £600. The hon. Member for Bethnal Green said that the reason why foreign nations were able to compete with us was because they received machinery of the very best description from us. But what he did not say was this—that that machinery, before it went into a country whose products were here received duty free, was taxed upwards of 100 per cent. Therefore, the price which this firm had to pay for the engine costing £600 in this country before it could be laid down in their manufactory in Spain, exclusive of carriage, was £1,200, so that we not only handicapped our own manufacturers in this country by this fiscal system, but we handicapped our manufacturers when they went to other countries. A few years ago it required no small courage on the part of anyone to express in public any doubts as to the wisdom of the fiscal policy which we had adopted. It seemed to be in the minds of some Gentlemen little short of rank blasphemy, such magnificent claims were made in behalf of Free Trade, such vast results were attributed to it. Mr. Giffen, the well-known statistician, even claimed the increase in the population of this country as one of the results of Free Trade. That was to say, that the increase which had taken place since 1841, which amounted, according to the Census Returns, to 41 per cent, had resulted from Free Trade. But how about the increase that had taken place in the preceding 40 years before Free Trade? From 1801 to 1841 the population had increased 70 per cent; and therefore, when Mr. Giffen laid claim to Free Trade as a cause of the increase in population in the last 40 years, how did he account for the greater increase which took place before we had Free Trade? That was only one instance of the extraordinary attributes that were laid to the credit of unlimited Free Trade. The whole of our prosperity from 1850 to 1870 was laid by some people to the credit of Free Trade. Some were inclined to doubt that, and to ask whether it had not been effected in spite of Free Trade. There had, at all events, been some other causes at work. Lord Beaconsfield had pointed out that the enormous discoveries of gold had had something to do with the prosperity of the last 25 years. He had heard it said by thoughtful men that the present depression was owing, in a great measure, to the scarcity of gold; but, considering that at the present moment there was more gold in the world than at any former period, it was difficult to understand how the depression could be due to that cause. There were enormous discoveries of gold in Australia and California between the years 1850 and 1880. In 1850 the gold of the world was estimated at

£630,000,000; in 1860, at £911,000,000; in 1870, at £1,175,000,000; and in 1885, at £1,504,000,000. The increase of gold must certainly have given a great impetus to the manufactures and industries of this country, so that it was hardly fair to ascribe their development exclusively to the establishment of Free Trade. Another great cause of the increase of our trade in the years between 1850 and 1880 was found in the wars that were then waged. These were the great American War which came to an end in 1864, the war between Austria and Prussia, and the Franco-German War. Those who remembered the immense impulse given to British trade by the demands which came from the countries which had been engaged in those wars would be slow to place all the prosperity of those years to the credit of Free Trade. But a short time ago those who expressed doubt on the subject of the vaunted efficacy of Free Trade were written down, and sometimes hooted down. Now there was certainly a change in public opinion. When the subject of our fiscal policy was referred to at public meetings speakers were listened to most intently. At Dumfries, two years ago, Lord Salisbury, when addressing a monster meeting, alluded to the subject; and he should never forget the effect that was produced upon the vast audience by the noble Lord's few words—which were not so clear and unmistakable as he could have wished them to be—but which, nevertheless, indicated that in the mind of the speaker there lurked some doubt as to the wisdom of the policy which the country had so long pursued. Between 1870 and 1884 the amount of our trade increased 24 per cent, while the amount of the trade of America and Protectionist Continental nations, taken together, increased 50 per cent. If Free Trade had really been the cause of our prosperity, it was worth while inquiring why the prosperity of Protectionist countries had increased in a greater ratio than ours. He should like to hear an explanation of that state of things from those who held that Free Trade afforded a sure path to prosperity. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) five years ago, referring to the apprehension that was felt by many people in consequence of the increase of our imports as compared with our exports, said that there was no cause for alarm, as the test of a man's prosperity was what he could buy, and that as long as our buying power increased there could be no reason to doubt our solvency. If the theory of the right hon. Gentleman were accepted there was undoubtedly cause for uneasiness now, for last year our imports showed a falling-off of £16,000,000—a great deal more than could be accounted for by a fall in prices, and our imports and exports together showed a shrinkage of £36,000,000. Hon. Members on this side of the House who spoke upon this question were often supposed to do so in the interests of agriculturists. But it was not only agriculture that was suffering just now. To take one instance, Sir Theodore Martin had lately stated that in consequence of the importation of Spanish lead, which could be sold at £8 5*s.* per ton, while English lead could not be produced at less than £8 15*s.*, 169 lead mines had been closed in this country in the last five years, and 30,000 miners had been thrown out of work. Was it well that 30,000 men here and 30,000 men there should be thrown out of work, and that they should sit with folded arms as if it were an indifferent matter, resting content with the assurance that the existing state of things was good for the consumer? Were they alone right and every other nation in the world wrong? Every other nation saw the necessity of providing that every man should be a producer, and recognized that for him to be a consumer he must first be a producer, and they accordingly paid the first attention to his interests as a producer. We reversed that process. The importation of lead was about 100,000 tons a-year, and its price was £12 5*s.* a-ton, or a saving of about 10*s.* a-ton over native lead, which, on the annual amount imported, made a saving of £50,000. But the loss of wages thereby entailed was £1,250,000. The hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Jennings) had alluded to the United States Tariff Commission. A Member of that Commission had recently written a book, in which he pointed out that the effect of Free Trade in England was to drive English capital abroad, and that as a result English manufacturers were to be found all over the Continent. In self-defence, he said, English manufacturers were taking their capital elsewhere. The explanation usually given was that wages were higher in England than on the Continent; but wages were higher still in America; and yet that did not occur there. A short time ago he built a new farmhouse; and although the contract was given to a local tradesman, he discovered that all the woodwork, lead, and other material had been imported from abroad. That caused him to make inquiries as to the wages of skilled artizans in America as compared with the wages in this country; and the result of those inquiries was that, whereas in England the average weekly wage of the skilled artizan was 30*s*., in New York the average weekly wage was 54*s*. He thought it was a matter of satisfaction that a subject of such pressing and vital importance had been introduced and discussed in that House, and that it had been done so with so little Party spirit.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby) said, one of the advantages of getting old was that one returned to the old, old stories of one's youth with such freshness and pleasure. It was with that sort of pleasure that he had listened to the speech of the hon. Baronet, who reproduced all the old Protectionist arguments which many years ago resounded through the country. He did not wonder at that meeting at Dumfries to which the hon. Baronet had referred. It was said of Dumfries by someone—

> "Paris may be a braw place, but for real pleasure gie me Dumfries,"

The hon. Baronet had taken his cue from the Marquess of Salisbury. There were few people, however, who in these days were bold enough to cling to the pure and unadulterated antique doctrine to which they had just listened. There was not a word in the speech of the hon. Baronet that referred to Reciprocity any more than there was in the Motion before the House, which sought to impose a mere duty on imports without reference to the fiscal policy of the countries from which the imports came. Any hon. Member who read the Resolution would not find one word about Reciprocity in it; it was to be a duty pure and simple. There was not a trace of their old friend Reciprocity, which it was formerly said by hon. Gentlemen opposite was needed for the protection of native industries. Therefore, it was a Protectionist Motion pure and simple. The hon. Baronet gave them an illustration concerning foreign material and work being used in building his house, which, for his own sake, he was glad he had been able to build at such a cheap rate. The hon. Baronet had specially referred to the importation of lead; but every man who had a roof over his head derived benefit from the cheapness of lead and other building materials, which enabled him to have a better house over his head than he otherwise would have for the same money if the importation of such materials was taxed. The hon. Baronet had argued that the loss more than counterbalanced the gain, as free importation destroyed and crippled certain industries, and thus threw numbers of men out of employment. That was the old fallacy, which, he thought, had disappeared like astrology and witchcraft. He did not know whether they still burnt witches at Dumfries; but possibly since the visit of the Marquess of Salisbury it had returned to the ancient faith. There was an admirable illustration of what the hon. Baronet had brought forward to which he would like to refer. It was given by the weightiest of all writers upon Free Trade, M. F. Bastiat. M. Bastiat had given this illustration—

> "You want materials at a high price to occupy a great number of people, and to cost a good deal of money; that is the object of Protection. Well, exclude all oranges from warm countries which you may buy at a penny, and if you grow them in hot-houses in England you will employ builders and people who put up hot-water pipes, &c.; you will raise an orange which will be sold at 1*s*., to the great employment of native genius."

But these were the familiar doctrines of Free Trade, and these were doctrines which all men of common sense had long since discarded. The arguments used against Free Trade were of the most illogical description. It was argued that if high prices ruled they would occupy a larger number of people at higher wages. That was the whole theory, but it was an utterly unsound one. It was said by those who were in favour of Import Duties that if they were put on all would be well. That was the elementary doctrine that was put forward; but it was a doctrine which he thought all men of common sense and experience had long ago discarded. He had observed that it was a tendency of human nature, perhaps, for everybody to think that the system under which they lived was the cause of all their miseries, and that their neighbours were much better off than they were themselves. He was very much struck the other day by reading the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Depression of Trade in France. An hon. Baronet had alluded to France, and to numerous trades that were better off there than in England, and had spoken of English merchants who had gone over to Rouen and other places because trade could be so much better carried on there. Spuller, in his examination of the causes of depression in France, spoke of the situation of the working classes in France as one which could no longer be considered a question of wages, but depended upon far wider and international contingencies, and said that trade in France was directly affected by the growth of America and by Protection in Germany. Yet when he (Sir William Harcourt) came to read the Report he referred to he saw it stated that the cause of the depression of trade in France was due to the persistent prosperity of England. France thus complained of the causes of depression in France. Here in England, on the other hand, they were told by the opponents of Free Trade that the depression of trade in this country was due to the prosperity of France because it clung to the system of Protection. ["No, no!"] Well, he had listened carefully to the speeches that had been made in favour of the Motion, and he distinctly understood that it was argued that the prosperity of every other country was due to their not having adopted Free Trade. Very well, exactly then if the prosperity of every other country was due to that, then the prosperity of France was due to it. ["No, no!"] Well, he maintained that every other country said the same of itself. He was afraid that he was guilty of an act of great ingratitude, as the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Jennings) had offered him £9,000,000 per annum of taxation on imported commodities by imposing an *ad valorem* duty of only 20 per cent. They would remember those old lines of Canning—

> "In matters of commerce the fault of the Dutch
> Is giving too little and asking too much."

They finished up—

> "Nous frapperons Falck avec 20 per cent."

The foreigners here were to be *frappés* with 20 per cent. The hon. Member (Mr. Jennings) who introduced the subject referred especially to silk. Silk was one of the commodities which the hon. Member would tax, and a great deal had been said about silk. In that same Report on the Depression of Trade in France, it was said that the silk trade was among the first to suffer in depressed condition of trade throughout the world; that a still more important fact was that St. Etienne goods did not happen to be the fashion, and that the public taste preferred the silks of England. That was the cause of depression in the silk trade in France—and the public in France preferred the silks of England, and even of Switzerland, yet silks had been the subject of special complaint by some English Protectionists. It was the same story all over the world. There were the same fallacies, the same complaints, founded on the same delusive statistics. The Report had stated that English goods were cheaper, and were produced under circumstances more favourable than those which governed the market of St. Etienne. So they were manufacturing silks, according to the French authorities, under circumstances more favourable than those which governed the market of the Protectionist of St. Etienne. He thought that the best *vade mecum* of Free Trade would be found in the Report on the Depression of Trade in England. In that Report they would find inevitable conclusions better than any of the books of economists, because it gave facts and figures, and the history of 40 years of Free Trade. He had been amused to see how very little this Report of the Commission had been studied on the other side of the House. In the years 1874 to 1879 there had been a serious fall in the exports of this country; and since that time they had very satisfactorily recovered, as hon. Members opposite would have seen if they had studied their own Report. He would give the House the figures. In 1854, when Free Trade might be said to have got into the saddle, the exports were £97,000,000; from 1855 to 1859 the exports had been £116,000,000; in the next five years, 1860-4, they were £138,000,000; in the next five years, 1865-9, £181,000,000; and from 1870 to 1874 £235,000,000. Then came that unfortunate five years from 1875 to 1880 when they had fallen from £235,000,000 to £202,000,000, a fall with which everybody was familiar except a few hon. Gentlemen opposite. In the years 1880-4 the exports rose again to £234,000,000. What nonsense it was to say that it was Free Trade that was killing our export trade. On the whole, our export trade had been increasing by geometrical progression. It was true that there had been intervals—he was not so foolish as to attribute it to the effect of any change in political Parties in a particular period, but there were circumstances in trade, as in weather and in tides, which varied from time to time. On the whole, however, our progress was onward, as everyone knew who examined into the matter. If hon. Members opposite really thought that for 40 years we had been pursuing a false fiscal system they would surely find some proof in the statistics of the country. If they looked at the statistics of the growth of the accumulated wealth of the country, whether from Income Tax Returns or other sources of information, they would see that it had greatly increased. If they had been pursuing a false system, would they not find that the profits of their trade had been diminished, and that the amount of their capital had been reduced? The contrary was the case, and in this period of Free Trade these figures had enormously increased. But the hon. Baronet said—Were we wiser than all other countries? If he wanted ideas on that subject, let him read Mr. Crowe's Report, and he would find that the complaints made here as being the result of Free Trade were the very complaints which were made more strongly in Protectionist countries. Again, he would refer the hon. Member to the last volume of the Report of the Trade Commission. He would find there most instructive Reports upon the condition of France. He would find, particularly at page 175, most interesting matter for reflection. He did not wish to weary the House with the figures. Look at Germany, which had developed a formidable rivalry of ourselves. Let him read the Reports as to Germany at the present time. Let him read the Reports as to the United States. He had reason to know something about the manufacturing industries of the United States. What did they find there? In every direction they had had complaints at home. Were there none of depression in the United States? Let them ask any American. On the trial of Charles I. someone asked where was Fairfax, and Lady Fairfax said—"He is not fool enough to be here." There was one hon. Member of that House who was not fool enough to be present on that occasion. He referred to the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Ormskirk Division of Lancashire (Mr. Forwood), who had written a letter on this subject. [An hon. MEMBER: He is here.]

MR. FORWOOD said, the right hon. Gentleman was in error. It was his brother, not himself, who had written the letter.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he hoped it was in the family. The gentleman referred to came back from America, and he described the deplorable effect upon the condition of the population produced by the protection of native industries. But an hon. Member had gone beyond all the theories they had ever heard, and had spoken of cheap windows and cheap doors of farm-houses imported, and he told them that the people who made these cheap articles were paid much higher wages than were paid here. He had not yet been able to understand how it was that high wages made the commodities produced cheap; and if the hon. Member really could make him understand that everybody was to have higher wages and everything was to cost less he would join his economic school. But was it true that things were cheaper in America? There was the question of woollens and other articles of clothing. Now, the hon. Baronet said the working classes were very much interested in this question, and so he (Sir William Harcourt) discovered at the last Election in Derby. His election was due entirely to the fact that his opponent was a Fair Trader. He asked his constituents what it was they wanted to have cheaper, and he never got an affirmative reply. His opponent suggested many things. He began with clocks. Why should a man, he said, not have a cheap clock? Well, he remembered the time when clocks were very dear, and now it was a great advantage to find them in every cottage. But according to the protective theory the price would be raised enormously; and at last, before the election was over, his Fair Trader opponent was reduced to pianofortes and artificial flowers. It was no use telling the men of Derby to tax woollens or linens, because they knew they would pay more for their clothes and their shirts. He would tell the hon. Baronet why it was that wages were higher in America. It was because the cost of living was higher than here, and it had been made so much higher by these protective duties. He met a friend some time ago from America, who said a man might buy three suits of clothes here and save enough to pay his passage to and fro, and pay his hotel bill while he remained. Well, that was, perhaps, not quite so; but it was near the truth. His friend showed him a coat—it was a good coat, perhaps a better one than he was wearing, and his friend said—"What do you think I gave for that coat in the States? Eighteen guineas." Did they suppose the working classes of this country did not know that? There was no man who lived in the days of Protection who did not know it, and if he did not know it his father would have told him. When corn was 100*s.* a-quarter, what was the working man's wages? Six and seven shillings a-week. He spoke to a man in the New Forest the other day, and he said that when he began life he had 1*s.* a-day, and a loaf was three times the price it is now. To quote the language of Sir James Graham, which he heard long before he had a seat in that House, in a debate on coercion, the working man knew the change which had taken place, and he knew the reason why. The people of England now knew the reason why. They knew why there were higher wages than 40 years ago, and they knew why the purchasing power of those wages was doubled. Did they think they were going to delude them with a Motion of that kind, to reverse a policy of such inestimable value to them and to their children? No. They would not find the people of this country so unintelligent as the Mover of that Motion believed them to be; and if he went to a division he would certainly be defeated.

Mr. E. STANHOPE (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Sir, nothing can be more striking to those who have listened to the course of this debate than the different manner in which the different speakers have approached this subject. The hon. Member for Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell) made an electioneering speech pure and simple; and he endeavoured to prove, by furbishing up all the arguments used at the last Election, and which I think were satisfactorily disposed of then, that all the bad trade which we have had in recent years is due to the policy of the Conservative Party. My hon. Friend who moved the Resolution approached the debate in a totally different spirit, and in his interesting and instructive speech there was much for every Member of this House to ponder over. My hon. Friend, indeed, spoke on behalf of a very important constituency, and he told us that he spoke especially on behalf of the working classes of that constituency. He told us that the views which he put forward are the views held by those whom he represents; and I do not think that anybody in this House can say that views put forward in that manner, and supported in that way, are not entitled to most careful attention and consideration on the part of every one of us. My hon. Friend pictured to us a mournful condition of things. He told us how trade has languished and fallen off, although, according to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who approached the subject in an entirely different spirit, everything is in a state of persistent prosperity.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt) (Derby): I never said that. That expression was contained in the Report of a French Commission on the Depression of Trade in France. It was not my phrase.

Mr. E. STANHOPE: At any rate, the right hon. Gentleman gave us to understand that all is for the best under the best possible Government. My hon. Friend on this side of the House drew a picture of the national depression of trade; but I did not hear the right hon. Gentleman admit that any depression of trade exists at all. Not one word of sympathy escaped the lips of the right hon. Gentleman for the classes who are suffering from that depression of trade. It was a common thing a year or two ago to say that there was, in reality, no depression of trade at all. We are now getting rid of that delusion. Formerly, when we talked of it we were called

Protectionists. We were told that we did not know what we were talking about, and the existence of the depression itself was uniformly denied. I am bound to say that the logic of facts has been too strong for that kind of derision; and nobody can deny now-a-days that a very serious depression of trade does exist in regard to many of the trades of the country. Indeed, I am afraid that there are symptoms of the depression of trade we complained of a year or two ago having gone on increasing in intensity until some fear that it has a tendency to become chronic. While, upon the one hand, the system of bounties and the system of foreign tariffs has tended to diminish profits, so, upon the other, the diminished consuming power of the country has largely tended to the same result. I was much interested in what we heard to-night with regard to capital from the hon. Member for Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell). He tells us that capital is in too few hands in this country. We have heard the same sort of thing before. We used to hear that the land of this country was in far too few hands; and the persistent attacks of the Radical Party upon the owners and occupiers of land has grievously increased the difficulties under which those classes have had to labour, has enormously diminished the value of landed property, and lessened the eagerness which formerly existed among all classes who invested their capital in land. But now the attack is going to be one upon capital. We are told that capital is in too few hands; and I do not hesitate to say that if the sort of language we have heard from the hon. Member is that which we are likely to hear in this Parliament, the only effect will be that, so far from trade showing any improvement, the tendency will be for capital to be driven out of the country, and to seek investment in other countries where it will not be exposed to such attacks. [An hon. MEMBER: Let it go to Ireland.] The late Government, believing that considerable depression existed, appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into that depression. We all remember that reception which that Royal Commission met with, and the jeers directed at it; but I think that there has never been a greater testimony to the wisdom of the late Government in appointing a Royal Commission than the fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer now says it is a most valuable argument in support of Free Trade, and he thanks us, in fact, for having appointed the Commission. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: Hear, hear!] I know what the right hon. Gentleman means by that cheer. He suggests that we appointed the Royal Commission with a foregone conclusion. We did nothing of the kind. The late Government invited Members of the opposite Party, who were interested in the question of Free Trade, to take seats on the Commission. They refused to accept the invitation, and we were obliged to form the Commission without their assistance. We appointed the Commission with no foregone conclusion whatever, but with a desire to ascertain the state of the trade of the country, and what remedies could be applied, in order to remove the existing depression. My hon. Friend the Member for Stockport (Mr. Jennings), although that Commission is still engaged in its inquiry, now comes forward with a definite and distinct proposal. That proposal resolves itself into several parts. As regards the first portion of it, urging that further Import Duties ought to be imposed, I have really very little to say. I, for my part, am of opinion that it will be of advantage to this country if the area of taxation can be enlarged, and the number of articles from which we derive a revenue can be increased. I am quite sure the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have been glad, when he brought forward his Budget the other day, and was under the unpleasant necessity of providing for a deficit, if he could have found any articles on which he could have increased the taxation of the country; and so, in the same way, I should be very glad to see one or two additional articles on which Import Duties could be levied, in order to give us greater weight in dealing with foreign countries. In our negotiations with foreign countries, in recent years, I believe that we have lost very much in having no lever, so to speak, with which to work. We have had nothing to give, and it was hopeless to expect to get adequate terms from foreign countries if we were not in a position occasionally to offer them something in return. I think I need not go further than the Spanish Treaty, the conclusion of which has been recently announced, because no one can deny that the greatest difficulty we have had to contend with in negotiating that and similar Treaties was the fact that this country was not in a condition to treat with any country in such a way as to show them that we could give them an adequate consideration for what we asked. My hon. Friend goes further than that, and he suggests that duties on articles imported should be levied upon goods entering into competition with similar goods of our own manufacture; and he has a plan, also, for disposing of the Revenue so raised. If my hon. Friend will forgive me for saying so, I cannot help thinking that that is too ambitious a proposal. I am not at all prepared to say that any increase of revenue, particularly if it were a large amount of revenue derived from the increased imposition of Import Duties, ought, in the first place, to be applied to the reduction of duties on tea, coffee, and cocoa. I cannot help thinking that the Income Tax-payers who have been called upon to make enormous sacrifices are entitled under such circumstances, at any rate, to the first place in the favourable consideration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Moreover, the proposal of my hon. Friend is not in itself a complete proposal. It could not stop where he leaves it. For instance, how is my hon. Friend going to meet the case of the farmer? He does not urge that any duty should be put upon food for the protection of the English farmer, nor does the English farmer urge that. We none of us put forward that contention; but what we do put forward, and are fairly entitled to say, is that if we are to be asked to pay an increased price for some of the goods which we buy in consequence of increased Import Duties for the benefit of certain trades at home, those who are interested in agriculture are entitled to ask that should they derive, at any rate, some advantage. They are entitled to say that the grievous burdens under which they are now suffering should have a favourable consideration at the hands of the Legislature, and that that favourable consideration should not be confined to the giving of an exceptional advantage to the trade of the country. That being so, I hope my hon. Friend will see that in bringing forward the Motion, and in putting before the House the views which his constituents and many other classes of the country entertain on this important subject, he has gained a great step. I trust he will also see that as there is a Royal Commission already considering the question, and as it is abundantly clear that, from his point of view, he is not able to take into the purview of the Resolution all the industries of the country, I hope he will consider that his object has been sufficiently attained by the discussion which has taken place to-night, and that he will not press the Motion further.

SIR JOSEPH M'KENNA (Monaghan, S.): I do not propose to occupy much of the attention of the House, and shall confine myself to one single question which has been raised by the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith)—namely, the depreciation of silver. Very few persons have attempted to offer any explanation of the cause of the depreciation of silver. I think that Parliament is accountable for the depreciation in a great degree, and for a good many of the consequences which have resulted from the depreciation. Before the precious metals became the subject of coinage they were used as the medium of exchange and barter; and when large sums in value had to be conveyed from one person to another it was done by means of gold or silver vessels, ornaments, or works of art. I need not remind hon. Gentlemen that we are told in Scripture history that when what we should now call a subscription had to be made by the leaders of the Tribes of Israel for the building of the Tabernacle, that subscription was made up of chargers or dishes of silver and golden spoons. Of course, that was anterior to any time in which we have any record of coined money. The primary use of silver is thus shown to have been its manufacture into articles of luxury and splendour. In this country our system of legislation has reduced the commercial value of silver 40 per cent below its statutory value in coinage; and the action of this country has made it, as a commercial medium, almost useless in other countries. At present, by reason of our high duty on its manufacture, there is a difference in silver of 30 or 35 per cent, *ad valorem*, a loss of so much in connection with its use for ordinary purposes; and I think the existence of that duty is a matter which deserves the early consideration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. That tax per ounce, measured as an *ad valorem* duty on ordinary articles of silver plate, has, I believe, completely broken down the trade. It is worse than any protective duty; for it is one which has absolutely destroyed that trade in this country. The value of silver has been very much reduced from two causes—first, owing to the large quantities of the precious metal produced in Nevada, and various other parts of North America; while its employment in coinage has not increased proportionately, and its conversion into articles of luxury has been absolutely cut off, and the commercial value of silver has been enormously depreciated in consequence. It would have been the same with any other important articles of commerce. Take the case of petroleum, or wheat, or any other article of commerce which forms one of the items of exchange between nations and nations. If such article had had a duty to the same extent imposed upon it as in the case of manufactured silver there would have been a similar depreciation of value with the same results. What I wish to press upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer is this—that at the earliest possible moment he should take this question of the depreciation of silver into consideration, and that he should consider the advisability of abolishing altogether the duty on silver plate, by which means we should be able to open up a market, and promote the use of silver to an enormous extent in other directions than those to which it is applied at the present moment. The very moment silver reaches this country the duty now imposed upon it begins to take effect; and the consequence is that it is now found more convenient to demonetize silver even in Germany than to utilize it for commercial purposes. I place this before the Government for their consideration. I believe that if we could reverse the principle upon which our legislation has been conducted, anything which could raise the commercial value of silver and lead to its remonetization generally would be of great advantage.

Mr. LLOYD (Wednesbury): At this late hour I only propose to address a few words to the House; but I desire to express my view on this question, inasmuch as I have been sent here to give the opinion of my constituents on the very important question which is now before us. They entertain the opinion, and they think it is only reasonable that the House should have it placed before them, that it is not altogether just to the working classes of the iron and coal districts of Staffordshire that we should go on charging taxation upon the industries of this country, and at the same time allow the industries of foreign countries to come in and compete with our own, and permit the produce of foreign labour to be sold in this country scot free from all taxation whatever. I will give a case in point. I will give an instance of a colliery with which I am connected. We employ about 500 men, and we raise about 1,000 tons of coal a-day; every ton pays to the taxes of this country 6*d.*, which means that we pay £25 to the taxation of the country for every day that we work the colliery. That coal is used largely in the manufacture of iron, and therefore the iron manufacturers are required to contribute in the same way to the taxation of the country. The unfairness of the system is this—that you allow foreign iron and steel from Germany, and foreign iron and steel from Belgium, to come into our district side by side in the market with the iron and steel which we produce. We have to pay this amount of taxation; but you allow foreign iron to come in scot free, and when we complain the only answer we get is—"You must endure these things." We know very well that taxes must be raised in order that the Government of the country may be carried on; but I would seriously ask the House how the English iron manufacturers and colliery proprietors can carry on their business against such odds? Of course, when I speak of the iron manufacturers and the colliery proprietors, I speak also of the iron workers and the colliers, because they are equally affected with their employers. Each ton of home-made iron pays, according to the labour expended upon it, from 8*s.* to 18*s.* towards our taxation. Therefore, every ton of iron you import comes into competition side by side, and duty free, with iron which is taxed from 8*s.* to 18*s.* a-ton according to the amount of labour put into it. Not only do we lose this amount of revenue by every ton of foreign iron, but it has this still more grievous effect—that it puts out of employment a very large number of our own men. What I ask is this—that it is only fair to the working classes that we should subject foreign-produced iron to the same amount of taxation we impose upon our own? Why should we love the foreigner so much? Why should we legislate in favour of the foreigner? Why should we back up the Railway Companies in importing foreign goods and discourage our own native manufactures? These are questions which require answering, and not the questions which we have heard to-night about depression of trade. It is not a question about depression of trade at all. The question is whether it is right and proper to tax the labour of the English workman and the collier, and at the same time allow the product of the labour of the foreign workman to come in untaxed? The English manufacturer has to compete in the markets of the world with the foreigner; and that is the reason why the foreigner can beat us. We, in effect, give a bounty to the foreigner to come in with his manufactured iron and steel, and other manufactured goods, to rob us of our home orders. Cannot hon. Members opposite see this? They say that they want cheapness, and to have our industries worked cheaply; but cannot they see that if they put taxation upon our own manufactures which is not put upon foreign manufactures, our own producers cannot compete with the foreigner as thoroughly as if both were taxed equally. Therefore, it is obvious that the taxation ought to be equal. That is what we ask for—namely, that the taxation we are called upon to bear should be equally borne by those who compete with us. I support the Motion of the hon. Member for Stockport, because, if carried into effect, it would help our working classes to live more cheaply, as the duties on tea and coffee would be taken away; or if not, and the foreign manufactured goods cease to come in, then we shall have more work to do in our own workshops to the extent of £46,650,000 a-year.

MR. ISAAC HOYLE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood): I should not have risen to address the House except for the reason that hitherto no Lancashire Member has spoken from this side of the House. Some hon. Members who have addressed the House this evening have based their arguments on the necessity of protecting working men. Now, I ought to know something about the condition of the working men of Lancashire. The hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Jennings) ridiculed the idea of the condition of the working men having been improved by the adoption of Free Trade. Either the hon. Member for Stockport is wrong, or I have spent my life to very little purpose indeed. What are the facts of the case in regard to the working classes? I know a manufacturing concern in Lancashire which is paying £75,000 a-year in wages. Before Free Trade measures were enacted the same concern would have paid only £40,000 a-year, and that was for 69 hours a-week compared with 56½ hours now. It now pays £75,000 a-year for 56½ hours' work a-week, whereas formerly it would have paid only £40,000 for 69 hours' work a-week; and what is the condition of the working classes compared with what it was formerly? They are better fed, better clad, better housed, and enjoy better health. [An hon. MEMBER: And are better educated.] Yes; and better educated; and if any hon. Member doubts that assertion, let him take a journey through Lancashire, and ask the opinion of any old people he may meet. He has nothing to do but to walk through such a town as Burnley, and he will find abundant evidence of comfort forthcoming in every direction. Life is brighter and better for the working classes than it was 45 years ago. I am speaking of what I know; but if there be any doubt the Registrar's Tables of Mortality will dispel the doubt. Life is longer than it was; and I would, therefore, advise the hon. Member for Stockport not to base his argument on the condition of the working classes. They know very well that they are better off than they were before. I will venture to say that there is no manufacturing country in the world where wages are not lower and the hours not longer than they are in Lancashire. The hon. Member for Wigtonshire (Sir Herbert Maxwell) mentioned an independent witness—Mr. Porter. Mr. Porter was sent by *The New York Tribune*, in the interests of the Protectionists of America, to find reasons for bolstering up Protection in that country;

and yet Mr. Porter has been spoken of as an independent witness. I have read Mr. Porter's letters, and I know what they are. The hon. Baronet the Member for Altrincham (Sir William Cunliffe Brooks) mentioned the depression existing in Lancashire, and the large number of persons out of employment there. No doubt, there are many unemployed persons there, and we all regret the fact. But what are the reasons? Large mills have been built and furnished with the best machinery. The constituents of the hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. J. M. Maclean) can turn out scores of new mills, well built, and furnished with the newest improvements in machinery; and the consequence is that old-fashioned mills have dropped out of the race, and the working men employed in them have been thrown out of employment. There are some mills standing in Lancashire which were built 40 or 50 years ago, and they are not at all adapted to the present condition of the manufacturing industry. The hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Jennings) has offered the Chancellor of the Exchequer £9,000,000 a-year; but I wonder how he would get it. Either the volume of imported articles would diminish under a tax of 20 per cent, or there would be no protection to working men. I am afraid that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not get his money, nor would the workpeople be protected. Another hon. Member has stated that a Free Trade policy was certain to benefit the manufacturers, but that it imposes a penalty which the landlords have to pay. Can manufacturers build their mills in the air? They want land, and they must purchase it from the landlords. The building material also comes from the land, as well as coals to supply the steam engines. The land on which the workpeople live must be purchased from the landlords; and, as both houses and mills are built upon long leases, whatever becomes of the manufacturer the landlord is tolerably sure of getting his rent. I will not trespass longer on the patience of the House. I will only say I am quite sure the workpeople of this country know on which side their bread is buttered; and I believe they will not be led away by such arguments as have been advanced by hon. Members who support the Motion.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) said, he was not going to be put down, neither was he going to waste time by giving a learned disquisition on Free Trade or Protection. They would be interested to learn the result of an actual experiment tried in an Australian Colony, for the truth of which he could vouch. It had not been contradicted when he explained the matter to his constituents. When the Victorian goldfields collapsed, 70,000 able-bodied men found themselves wandering aimlessly about the streets in search of employment. They found the shops and warehouses like the shops and warehouses in London to-day—that is, filled with imported goods of all descriptions from America, Germany, France, and elsewhere. They asked themselves, "Can we not make these things?" "Yes," was the reply of their leaders, "but first we must put a duty on the imported articles." The tariff was accordingly imposed, and tens of thousands found employment. The large importers then erected large manufactories, and only imported, the raw or unmanufactured products on which no duty was imposed. [An hon. Member: How about New South Wales?] The hon. Member who referred to New South Wales could know nothing about the subject. That Colony was partly Free Trade, but it was four times larger than Victoria; it had splendid pastoral resources, and also mineral resources, which Victoria had not; and it had a smaller population Twenty-two years had passed since Protection had been in force in Victoria, and only the other day one of the leading men there, who was formerly a Freetrader, wrote as follows:—

> "Very many things are now manufactured in the Colony that were formerly exclusively imported, and these industries have been materially aided by the heavy protective tariff now in force. Among the articles and preparations may be instanced account books, diaries, stationery, dyes, glass, cloth, paper, cigars, starch, pianos, furniture, carriages, clothing, organs, chemicals, blasting materials, oilmen's stones, safes, brushware, soap, agricultural implements, &c.
>
> "In all, the number of manufactories, large and small, exceed 2,000 exclusive of flour mills, breweries, woollen mills, brickyards, potteries, soap and candle works, tobacco factories, tanneries, fellmongeries, and woolwashing establishments.
>
> "These 2,000 manufactories employ over 40,000 hands, and a manufacturing plant valued at over £6,500,000."

Those hon. Members who still doubted might have ample evidence of the progress of Melbourne and the Colony of Victoria generally, if they would visit the great Exhibition at Kensington. [*Opposition cheers, and cries of* "Divide!"] Hon. Members might cry "Divide!" but he claimed to be heard on behalf of Kent, which undoubtedly was the most intelligent county in England. It was acknowledged to be so, and statistics proved it. ["No!"] Well, if hon. Members on the opposite side of the House wanted proof, he would point to the conclusive fact that at the last General Election Kent returned 19 Conservatives to Parliament, and not one Radical. He would not waste time, but give them facts. He quoted evidence to show that in June of last year one large manufacturer and merchant closed his mills in England, and imported from Westphalia goods into England, the labour alone of which represented £30,000. He (Mr. Heaton) contended that it would be difficult to persuade the working men of England that the £30,000 worth of work of which they were thus deprived was for their benefit. It meant starvation to hundreds of honest men, because the foreigner would not allow English goods to be sent to his country—a heavy tax was imposed. He had said all he desired to say, and in conclusion he asserted that in a very few years the working men of England would return a majority of Members to the House in favour of his hon. Friend's Motion.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question again proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

MINING ROYALTIES.—RESOLUTION.

MR. MASON (Lanark, Mid): The House has listened to a very discursive debate upon Free Trade, Fair Trade, and the Depression of Trade. But the subject which I have to submit to the House has reference to the question of mining royalties and the way in which they are levied. I think that this question has a great deal to do with the depression of trade through which the country is now passing; and there can be no question that industries depending upon coal and iron are affected very materially by the heavy rents and royalties which they have now to pay to the landlords of this country. There is, I think, a misconception abroad, both in and out of Parliament, upon this matter, which has only lately been agitated. A deputation waited upon the Home Secretary upon the subject in March last, and the right hon. Gentleman promised to lay the important statement then made to him before the Cabinet. No answer, however, has yet been received in reference to the message which the Home Secretary conveyed to the Cabinet; and perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will be able now to shed a ray of light on the views of the Government upon the matter, and we may expect the answer which we were promised in March. I am sorry to find that the right hon. Gentleman appears to have thought that the deputation went to him in order to get parties who had entered into bad bargains relieved from them by the State. Nothing was further from our object than that. We would not lift our little finger to give relief of that kind to any of the parties who have entered into these bargains if there were not a much more important question behind—namely, the relief of some of the great industries of the country and those who are dependent on them. I find that the same idea which was entertained by the Home Secretary has also taken possession of the ex-Home Secretary. Probably it is a weakness on the part of Home Secretaries to imitate each other, and the ex-Home Secretary appears entirely to follow the lead given to him by the present Home Secretary at the time we approached him at the Home Office. This, however, is not at all our object; but the object we have in view is to relieve those industries, and those who are dependent upon them, who are at present suffering from great hardship indeed in consequence of the greatly reduced wages which they are receiving, partly caused by the heavy royalties which the mineowners have to pay to the landlords. The Resolution which I have placed upon the Paper states my views, and has received the sanction of those with whom I am acting in connection with this matter. I will read that Resolution to the House—

> "To call attention to the system of Mining Royalties; and to move, 'That, in the opinion of this House, the existing system of contracting for Mining Rents and Royalties is unsatisfactory, and should be amended by the Legislature on an equitable basis in the interests of all concerned.'"

I think hon. Members will agree with me

that that is a very moderate and fair Resolution, and perhaps more so than many persons in the country may feel disposed to accept as a sufficient solution of it. I think there can be no question at all that what is stated in the Resolution—namely, that—

"The existing system of contracting for Mining Rents and Royalties is unsatisfactory,"

is perfectly true. I admit at once that mining rents and royalties are at present governed by freedom of contract, and I think that freedom of contract is a very admirable principle indeed for the conduct of commercial operations. I believe most thoroughly in the principles of Free Trade, notwithstanding the arguments we have heard to-night, which are certainly arguments which have been answered over and over again, and exploded years ago. Have we a free market in regard to these mining rents and royalties at the present moment? Because to have freedom of contract we want a free market. The minerals of the country are at this moment in possession of the landlords. The landlords of the country are a limited number, and are practically masters of the situation. The minerals are the property of the landlords, and we know that the land, as well as the minerals, is a fixed quantity. You cannot increase it by a single acre, neither can you increase the minerals by a single ounce; and the landlords having possession of the land and the minerals are, as I stated before, masters of the situation, and can do as they like with regard to the minerals. But in reference to the monopoly which the landlords now enjoy, the principle has been recognized by this House that Parliament is entitled to interfere in dealing with this practical monopoly. We have already recognized the principle by interfering with land and rents in Ireland. We recognized the same principle in passing the Crofters Bill, and this House recognized it also the other night in carrying the second reading of the Railway Rates Bill without even a division. In so doing we have affirmed the principle I desire to lay down—that we are entitled to interfere with the system of contracting for mining rents and royalties. With regard to the question of royalties, perhaps the House will allow me to state a few facts in order to see how far they operate or affect the industries of this country. I will take, in the first place, the iron trade of the country. I think the House will admit that that industry is a most important one, the foundation, so to speak, on which rests the future greatness and prosperity of the country, the other manufacturing industries of the country depending largely upon its prosperity. What are the facts of the case in connection with royalties payable upon the manufacture of pig iron? I hold in my hand a very important and valuable work, published by a very high authority upon this question — Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell. The House will admit that no higher authority can be found, and he says that in Cumberland the royalties per ton upon pig iron amount to 6*s.* 3*d.*; in Scotland to 6*s.*; Cleveland, 3*s.* 3*d.*; in Belgium from 1*s.* 2*d.* to 4*s.*; in France to only 8*d.*; and in Germany still less — namely, 6*d.* These are startling and important facts, and very serious facts indeed, in connection with the foreign competition, of which we have been hearing so much to-night. How in the name of common sense can it be expected, all other things being equal, that this country can compete with foreigners abroad in the manufacture of iron, when the raw material can be got for 6*d.* a-ton in Germany, for which in Scotland we have to pay 6*s.*, and in Cumberland, 6*s.* 3*d.*? It is unnecessary that I should argue that question any further, because it is quite patent to any ordinarily intelligent man that Scotland used to be the chief market for the manufacture of pig iron. It is fast losing its supremacy in that respect, chiefly on account of the heavy royalties the ironmasters are asked to pay for the minerals they use. English and Scotch manufacturers are handicapped to an enormous extent; and the result is that, whereas the iron used in the foundries of the West of Scotland was Scotch iron, it is now being supplanted. Glasgow is now importing pig iron from Cleveland at the rate of 1,000 tons per day, caused by the difference between a royalty of 3*s.* 3*d.* per ton in Cleveland and 6*s.* in Scotland—a difference quite sufficient to enable the Cleveland ironmasters to compete with the Scotch ironmasters in the Glasgow market. In answer to that it may be said—"Why do not the ironmasters give up their leases;" but when hon.

Gentlemen talk in that way they forget that an enormous capital has been sunk by the ironmasters in their plant, and for them to give up their leases and abandon their works would simply mean ruin. They go on hoping against hope, and the result is that the present stock of pig iron in Connal's stores is enormously large—larger, I believe, than it has ever been before in the history of the iron trade. They cannot stop, but they are compelled to go on producing, and in consequence their stock is increasing at an unparalleled rate. A crisis is inevitable, if such a state of things continues much longer without a remedy. One point to which I wish to direct the attention of the House is this—that in Germany and France the State has retained possession of the minerals; and to show the difference between private ownership and State ownership, I may mention that in Belgium the royalties payable on the manufacture of a ton of pig iron ran from 1*s.* 2*d.* to 4*s.* a-ton; whereas in Germany they are only 6*d.*, and in France 8*d.* per ton. We have recently heard of serious and terrible riots in Belgium. Why did those riots occur? It was because the ironmasters and mineowners say that they have been losing money; and therefore they attempted to reduce the wages of the men they employed to a point at which the men declared they are unable to live. Serious riots ensued in consequence; but the ironmasters and mineowners say that they cannot help the workmen unless the royalties are reduced to the same scale as those which are paid in France and Germany. They maintain that until that is done it is impossible for the Belgian ironmasters to pay their way, or for the trade to prosper. The coalmasters in this country say they have had to reduce the miners' wages in consequence of the high royalties they have to pay; and the ironmasters have not been able to find a market for their iron owing to the competition to which they have been subjected from abroad. The chief cause of this is the royalties paid both by the coalmasters and the ironmasters. These have stood at much too high a figure in past times; but, nevertheless, the rents demanded for the royalties have gone on increasing; and in order to make both ends meet the ironmasters and coalowners have been obliged to resort to a reduction of the wages of their men. In my own Division of the county of Lanark, which contains probably the most important mining constituency in Scotland, the rents are fixed, and run from £500 to £5,000 per annum. The rent is independent of the royalties, but merges into the royalty when the quantity put out exceeds the rent. The charge, therefore, goes on increasing according to the quantity taken out; but supposing that the works are not going on the rent is still exacted, and the coalmasters have to do something to enable them to pay the rent to the landlord. The rent being a fixed sum, and the wages not being a fixed sum, the masters took advantage of the labour market, and reduced the wages of their men to such a point that the poor men are at present scarcely able to keep body and soul together. Perhaps I may be allowed to give an illustration in order to show how the case stands at present. In the county of Lanark some royalties are as much as 1*s.* 4*d.* a-ton; but while the landowner is receiving that sum the poor miner only gets 10*d.* a-ton for hewing the coal. In the North of England some of the miners are, I believe, actually receiving less than 10*d.* a-ton—in some instances as low as 7*d.* I know of one landowner in my Division who, at the present time, is deriving no less than £114,000 a-year out of his mining royalties; yet neither he nor his forefathers ever contributed one farthing towards the creation of that enormous income. There is no wonder that the poor miner points to cases such as this, and complains of the existing system, when inequalities such as this are known to exist. I am not surprised that the hon. Member for Bethnal Green (Mr. Howell) should say that in this country capital is too largely accumulated in a few hands. In France and Germany the State has wisely retained the possession of the minerals in its own hands; and I think it would have been as well if in past ages this country had taken the same course. The power of doing that has now passed away. There can be no question at all that the State originally was the proprietor of the minerals. In Scotland, I believe, down to about 200 years ago, the Crown had possession of the minerals, and I presume that it was the same in England. I am not aware whether there was ever any repeal of the law in Scotland; but it certainly fell into disuse, and I believe that disuse in such matters is equivalent to repeal. I do not see the Lord Advocate present; but there are probably other legal Gentlemen present who will be able to correct me if I am wrong. In consequence of the law falling into disuse the landowners virtually became proprietors of the minerals without any special Act of Parliament to recognize their right; and now, of course, they are the legal possessors of the minerals of the country, and draw large incomes from this source of wealth. There is another point in connection with the working of these minerals to which I wish to direct the attention of the House, because it leads up to the Resolution which I have placed upon the Paper. The original method of entering into leases for the working of minerals in Scotland was not, as it is now, by paying fixed rents and royalties. It was a much more simple system. The recognized owner of the minerals received a given quantity of the output of the mine, or a given percentage of it. The effect of this arrangement was that the larger the quantity the larger the return to the landowner, who shared with the mineowner in the prosperity of the mine; but if the mine was not worked there was nothing to pay, or if worked moderately there was, consequently, a moderate sum to pay. I certainly think that that was a much more satisfactory arrangement than the hard-and-fast system under which the mines are worked now. I now come to what I would suggest as a remedy for the existing state of things. The remedy which I would suggest is a very simple one, and it is the following up the old Scottish system. I think it would be wise to revive that plan, rather than require the payment of a fixed sum, because there might be a fiery mine or a very wet mine, which will require great care, and be very expensive to work; and it is impossible to know, until experience has been obtained, whether it will be a profitable mine to work or not. I know of one case in which a sum of £50,000 was spent in sinking a pit and putting in machinery, and when it came to be worked it was found that it could not be profitably worked at the royalty agreed to be paid. The mineowner approached the landowner, told him the facts of the case, and asked for a reduction of the royalty, adding that unless he got a reduction it would be impossible for him to continue working the mine. The landowner, however, refused to make a reduction, and the £50,000 sunk in the mine was entirely lost. The mine itself is not being worked now. What I would suggest is that the old Scotch system should be revived. Perhaps it may be not quite so applicable to England as it is to Scotland, although I confess I see none. The Scotch system was that a certain percentage should be paid to the landowner of the output by way of royalty. There may be a difficulty and difference of opinion as to what that percentage should be; some landlords take a different view from others, and until the coal is reached it is difficult to arrive at what the cost of working it will be. What I would suggest is that we ought to have a Royalty Court, or a Commission, or some other tribunal, to decide what would be a fair percentage of the output that should fall to the landowner from the working of the mine. I do not think there would be anything unfair in that. No one has any desire to take the minerals away from the landowner without giving compensation, or to compel him to part with any covenant he may have entered into with his tenant at a great sacrifice, unless the public welfare demands it. If the landlord and tenant are willing to go on with the lease they have entered into, let them go on; but the tenant should be entitled, if he has a grievance, to go before some regularly constituted tribunal, if the royalty imposed is too great, and state all the facts before the Court, with a further statement, supported by evidence, that he is unable to pay the royalty, and then, after full consideration, the Court should have power to compel the landlord to yield. I am glad to observe that the present Government have directed their attention to this question in connection with the Land Purchase Bill for Ireland. It is a proof to me that they are proceeding in the right direction; and although there is no desire to revive absolutely the old rights of the Crown, there is a disposition to restore the former arrangement with regard to the working of minerals. The clause of the Land Purchase Bill to which I refer is sub-section 2 of Clause 11, and I am glad to see the principle which it contains embodied in the Bill. It is a long step towards the adoption of the principle at which I am aiming, and I expect to see the Home Secretary rise in his place and say that he supports the Resolution which I intend to propose. The Royalty Court or Commission which I suggest should have power to settle all disputed cases in connection with ascertainable surface damages, way-leaves, and the like, besides a great many matters which at present it is very difficult to settle. I think it is most desirable that there should be some such Court with very full powers. Of course it must be an impartial Court, presided over in Scotland by Sheriffs of counties, and in England probably by the County Court Judges. I have no wish to interfere with the right of any individual where that is not affecting the people or the public interest; but I wish to arrive at an equitable solution of this most difficult question, so that the great industries of the country may be no longer unduly handicapped. I think I have shown the necessity for something being done, and I trust the Government will move in the direction I have indicated. I believe that under my plan the interest of the landowner would be sufficiently protected, and that we should be able to do justice to that large body of hard-working, industrious men, who are at present toiling very hard for the means of dragging on a miserable existence, and who are, at the same time, adding so much to the wealth of the country. I am quite sure that the House would act wisely if they decided to face the question, and it must be faced before long, and perhaps it may not then be faced so easily, or on so just and equitable a basis. If we face this question now I am certain that we shall find the future of the country less seriously imperilled than hon. Members opposite seem to believe. I have been a manufacturer myself for the last 30 years, and I know that foreign competition is certainly very hard upon us at the present time. But I have no faith in the Fair Trade nostrums which have been suggested as a remedy for the evil, nor do I take so gloomy a view of the future as is taken by many persons. I believe that by taking advantage of the skill and ability of our workmen, and the splendid machinery and appliances which the country possesses, we shall be able to hold our own against any country in the world, and I do not fear any competition whatever. All I ask is that we should be in a position to avail ourselves of the advantages we possess, and I am sure that the physical, mental, and intellectual power of our population will never be surpassed by any foreigners. We require nothing but freedom to enable us to develop the resources of the country to the fullest extent; and if something is done to relieve our coal and iron industries, and we make the best use of our wealth and our unrivalled mechanical appliances by taking advantage of these to the full, I have no doubt that England will still be able to hold her own in the markets of the world.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): In seconding the Motion of my hon. Friend who has just sat down, I trust I may be permitted to say that I have listened to the debate which has taken place in this House to-night with considerable interest; and I feel certain, from what has been said, that we may safely calculate upon the sympathy and support of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite in carrying the Motion which has been so ably moved by my hon. Friend. Whatever may have been our thoughts, whatever may have been the opinions entertained by us previous to this Parliament, with respect to the attention which has been given to the interests of the working classes of this country in this House, so far as this Session is gone, I think the working classes must have been struck by the debates which have been so obviously, and I may say ostentatiously, started in their interest. Well, Sir, the question which has been brought before the House by my hon. Friend is one in which the constituency I have the honour to represent takes a deep interest, and one which they regard as of very great importance to them as a mining community. In my own Division in Northumberland, as indeed in almost every other Division in the county at the time of the last Election, there were many questions which secured a large amount of public interest and attention. Since that time the interest in many of these questions has subsided, or been considerably modified in its tone and expression. But the interest that was manifested at the time of the General

Election in the North of England by the miners and ironworkers has not only not subsided with the lapse of time, but has positively increased in volume. It has intensified in its character, and increased in the forms of its expression. Is that to be wondered at when we consider how heavily the coal and iron industries of the country are handicapped by the oppressive charges and burdens which are laid upon them? Those who are laying an embargo upon the coal and iron trades, and placing the owners at a disadvantage in competing with the trade of other countries, incur great responsibilities indeed. I think I am correct in saying that there are many mineowners who have, for a number of years, not only received no return for the capital they have invested, but many who have positively endured a loss. Indeed, a friend of mine who is largely interested in the coal trade of the North of England told me the other day that he and the other members of his firm, for a number of years, have not received any return for their capital, and yet they have been paying to the lords of the manor, or the royalty owners, a sum of £20,000 per annum in the shape of royalty rents. Well, Sir, the wages of the miners have been reduced to the lowest possible point, to a point at which, as my hon. Friend has remarked, it is scarcely possible for them to keep body and soul together; and, indeed, but for the large sums that have been distributed amongst the mining population in the North of England from their trade organizations, many strong, willing, and able-bodied men, and men of independent spirit, would have been compelled, from mere force of circumstances, to seek relief from the Guardians. In Northumberland alone, since the beginning of this year, no less than £7,000 have been distributed amongst miners; and I believe I am perfectly right in saying that in Durham even a much larger sum than that has been distributed amongst the miners. During all this time, while those who pay the royalty have been receiving no return for their capital, and the wages of the miners have been reduced to almost starvation point, the landowners and royalty owners have been in receipt of large sums of money for rent, which, in all fairness, ought to have gone in interest on capital or in wages to the miners. The extent to which the coal and iron industries in this country are affected by these charges may be learned by hon. Members who care to consult that valuable work to which my hon. Friend referred. Or, if they do not care to go to the expense of purchasing that book, if they will turn to the Blue Book lately issued containing evidence given before the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the cause of Depression in Trade, they will find there the evidence of that gentleman most fully stated, who said, in answer to questions put to him by one of the Members of that Commission with regard to the extent to which trade in this country was affected as compared with other countries by royalty charges, that the royalties in Cleveland on every ton of pig iron amounted to 3*s.*; in Lancashire it amounted to 6*s.* 3*d.*; in Scotland to 3*s.* In Germany he said that the royalty on pig iron was something like 6*d.* a-ton; in the United States it varied considerably, being sometimes nothing at all, and sometimes as high as 6*s.* or 7*s.* a-ton; and in France it was 8*d.* But, Sir, there is this great difference between the countries named and our own. In those countries the royalties are in the hands of the State, whereas in this country they are the property of private individuals. I have often, in my experience, regarded it as a very unfair thing that royalty owners, who run none of the risk and submit to none of the privations incident to the miner's life, in many instances receive more in the shape of royalty than the man who descends with the line carrying his life in his hand, and who cuts the diamond and sends it to the surface. I regard this state of things as very unfair and very unsatisfactory indeed; and I hope that the Government, and the Members of this House also, will be disposed to accept the Resolution so ably offered by my hon. Friend, and that they will adopt his suggestion for the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the system that now obtains in charging royalty rents. I will only say in conclusion that the hand of a kind Providence has made our beloved country to teem with mineral wealth as, it would appear, a sort of set-off of compensation for our limited area of surface; and I regret that we have for so long looked upon this mineral wealth, this natural wealth that was undoubtedly placed there to minister to the comfort and happiness of the people, that it should be regarded by this country, while every other country has endeavoured to disregard it, as the property of individuals. I am glad to see, as my hon. Friend has stated, that in the Land Purchase Bill for Ireland what I consider to be a right departure has been made in this respect, for, undoubtedly, the mineral wealth of this country ought to belong to the nation, and not to private individuals. The terms of this Motion, however, do not go so far as to say that the Government ought to take all rights that private landowners have in the mineral wealth of the country; but the Government and this House are invited to express their opinion that the present system of levying royalty duties is unfair and unsatisfactory, and ought to be adjusted in the interests of all concerned. I beg to second the Resolution of my hon. Friend.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words, "in the opinion of this House, the existing system of contracting for Mining Rents and Royalties is unsatisfactory, and should be amended by the Legislature on an equitable basis in the interests of all concerned,"—(*Mr. Mason,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. HALDANE (Haddington): Sir, I wish to make a few remarks on the Resolution of the hon. Member for Mid Lanarkshire (Mr. Mason). Beyond all doubt, there is a grievance; the difficulty which arises is as to the remedy for that grievance. If, when these royalties are fixed, the market price of iron is high they may be perfectly fair enough; but there comes a time when prices fall, and when they bear no relation to the price of iron. If the royalties remain unaltered under those circumstances, the lessee of the mine pays an undue amount to the owner of the soil, and, in consequence, has to pay less wages to the workmen. In such cases great hardships have been found to exist, and the effects of the system will be apparent to anyone who goes through the mining districts in this country. Well, Sir, how is that to be remedied? The question is a difficult one. Undoubtedly there is a grievance, and my hon. Friend says he has a simple way of dealing with it. He would appoint a Land Court to adjudicate upon what should be the fair charge which a ton of mineral should pay. But I should like to ask my hon. Friend how far he proposes to carry his suggestion? It may be that the amount of the royalties was fixed when the price of minerals was high, and in that case it is only right that it should be paid; but is my hon. Friend prepared to say that when the royalties are fixed at a time when minerals are low in price there is to be an inquiry as to whether miners are not receiving unduly high wages? It seems to me that his proposal leads you to that conclusion; and, if so, it conducts you to a sea of difficulty from which you will not easily extricate yourself. My hon. Friend says "No;" but I ask, how far does he propose to extend the interference of the Court which he proposes to set up? Some hon. Gentlemen would, no doubt, say it ought to be extended to fixing the rate of wages generally. But I should like to know where that principle is to stop? I am not afraid of Socialism; but this kind of Socialism I am not prepared to contemplate until my hon. Friend shows me that there is no other remedy. We grant the evil to exist; but we ask, can it not be met by other means? I think the main difficulty arises from this—you have in land something which carries with it attributes of an anomalous character, not merely legal, but also political and social. The owner of land is undoubtedly placed in a position of great advantage in comparison with the man with whom he is dealing. It is not because land is a monopoly. There are other monopolies than land; capital is a monopoly. ["No!"] However that may be, in the case of land undoubtedly you have, what you have not in the case of capital, a peculiar *status* which enables the owner to assume a position of advantage in relation to those with whom he is dealing. And I say it is that which it should be the object of your Land Reform to remove. But I cannot think it is necessary to wait until then before you touch this question of mines. Why should there not be a Bill placed before the House of Commons to enable owners and managers to let land on the terms similar to those which existed under the Scotch system, the royalty varying according to the price, or, it may be, assuming the form of a share of the rent? You might embody some form of lease based on this principle in the Schedule of the Bill which is to bring this principle into operation; and you might in that way assist the owners of the fee simple, as well as limited owners, in conforming their contracts to the equity which ought to regulate transactions of this kind; in other words, you can extend the powers of limited owners enormously. Reforms of that sort would put persons dealing with the owners of land on a footing of equality, or something like it, and you would be introducing something approaching to a system of free contract. You would have a remedy which is calculated to bring about a better state of things in which men would have to rely on their own exertions. The Resolution of my hon. Friend is open to this remark—it is one which simply affirms that the law is in urgent need of reform. I believe it is. And I hold it is in urgent need of reform for the reasons I have stated; and, therefore, reserving as I do all assent to the proposal suggested by the hon. Member for Lanarkshire, I shall support the Resolution before the House.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): My hon. and learned Friend is a very good lawyer, and it is always easy for a lawyer to throw difficulties in the way of almost any proposition that can be made. I am not at all surprised that he should have suggested several difficulties in connection with this Motion; but I am not aware that any reform has ever been suggested, or ever could be suggested, against which difficulties could not be arrayed. Admitting, as the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Haddington (Mr. Haldane) has very candidly done, that the law is in urgent need of reform, it appears to me—and here I differ from the hon. and learned Gentleman—that the difficulties and injustices that exist, and that undoubtedly are most glaring, can be most easily rectified by the carrying out of the proposal which has been already sanctioned for the establishment of a Court in which an impartial tribunal will do justice between man and man. I do not see that there is anything so startling in such a proposition. And if it is said—"We do not know how you are going to extend this system; we do not see that it has anything to do with the matter," I reply that we shall extend the system just as far as we find it necessary, and that I shall rejoice when Land Courts are established all over the country to deal with agricultural as well as mineral matters. The difficulty my hon. and learned Friend suggested as to the raising of royalties when found to be too low will not arise at all, so far as I understand the matter, because the suggestion which was put forward very clearly by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lanark (Mr. Mason) was that a royalty should be established on a sliding scale; and that would necessarily imply that when the price of minerals was high the royalty owners should have, proportionately, a large share of the money; and, on the other hand, when the price fell their share should be proportionately diminished. That cannot be called an unfair or unjust proposal. I do not suppose that the owners would wish to have more than their fair share, though I am bound to say that in the history of our country they have always had a great deal more than their share. I take it, however, that in the democratic epoch we are entering upon the mineral owners, like other human beings, will be anxious to have only their fair share, and will not want to be put down as avaricious and greedy. In making a few remarks because of the position my Division of Cornwall occupies in connection with this subject, even at this late hour I wish to draw attention to two points that have not been touched on by hon. Gentlemen who have preceded me. The hon. Gentleman the Member for the Wansbeck Division of Northumberland (Mr. Fenwick), in his very interesting speech, dealt only with the coal and iron industries; but I want to draw the attention of the House to certain very flagrant cases in connection with other industries, because it must be understood that this is not a question affecting only one part of the country. When the House realizes that fact it will see how excessively important that question is. I would not say that it is more important; but it certainly is not less important than that question of Free Trade, the discussion of which has taken up so many hours this evening. There is no part of the country where there are any minerals worthy of being got where you will not find the keenest interest taken in this question of royalties; and, more than that, if you consider the incubus at this moment wearing down our mineral centres by reason of these excessive rents and royalties, and indirectly affecting every other industry in the country, you will at once see that the question of rents and royalties connected with mines goes to the root of the whole of that depression in our trade of which we have been hearing so much. I do not exaggerate very much the importance of this subject—though it may seem to some a common one—when I say that there is no class of trade or industry in the country that does not feel the effect of the depression consequent upon this great incubus. But the other point I wish to refer to for one moment, and which is part of the question, though no one has referred to it, is the excessive rents exacted, not only for the mere minerals, but in respect of what are called "way-leaves," or right of way over land. I shall be able to prove how, in one or two instances, trading interests are in this way crippled and fettered. With the permission of the House I would bring before hon. Members, in connection with that last point, one or two facts; and I do so because I do not want here to spin a long yarn, but desire by one grain of fact to dispel many tons of fiction. Here is a case from Aberystwith. I may say that constantly I am receiving information from all parts of the country—statements all corroborating each other—showing how just is the demand made in connection with this question. From Aberystwith I have this statement—that in a country like Wales, which almost entirely depends upon water power, most exorbitant charges are often made for water-courses and pools, and that fabulous sums have been exacted for what may be called practically worthless land. As far as this last statement is concerned, I have plenty of evidence I could lay before the House from my own experience in Cornwall. A further statement comes to me from Northumberland, which also bears on the question of way-leaves. I am told that in a certain place, in order to get the minerals to the railway, it is necessary to go over the land of another party. The party over whose land the minerals had to be carted by iron ways died, and it was endeavoured to obtain from his successor permission to use the right of way as hitherto; but it was refused. In another case which comes from Saltney, which is near Chester, information is given to me that in the case of a particular Welsh mine £4,000 were spent in opening it up, and metalliferous veins 12 feet thick and 60 feet wide were found. Those who worked it were hampered in their proceedings by the difficulty of getting their produce to the sea coast, only two miles away, owing to the refusal of the landowner to allow a light tramway to be run alongside the hedges in two fields, and over some waste land all but bordering on the sea. In this case there were a number of unemployed miners in the district. The mine could have been worked at great advantage owing to the low prices; but in consequence of the hostility of this one man it was obliged to remain idle—through the selfishness of one man 100 were prevented from being employed. I say that it is a scandalous state of things that hundreds of men should be kept out of employment and mineowners should be ruined through the caprice of one man. I would ask the hon. Member for East Lothian what he would suggest in that case. It is not a question of adjusting rents and royalties according to the output of the mine; but here you have the rights of landowners, in respect of which you have to pay money. They say—"Here are the terms of the Land Bill—you may accept them, but you shall have none other." I say, whilst the present law of the country gives, as it does, absolute right to ownership over the land we are slaves to the landowners—nothing less. You cannot do justice between man and man and get these grievances redressed you cannot free our national industries from this incubus, which weighs them down and squeezes them under, until you have some reliable and impartial tribunal which can do justice in cases like this. Now, with respect to the question of rent. Here is a statement which has appeared in print, and which has not been contradicted, in which I am told that a colliery in the Midland Counties is now standing idle, and those who have it in hand are paying a large yearly minimum rent in preference to working coal which is practically unworkable. In another case a noble Lord insisted on being paid twice over for coal within a few years. These are cases which have only to be mentioned to carry to everyone's mind a conviction as to the necessity of having some authority to control and regulate the matter. I do not know whether hon. Members are familiar with the actual terms which are to be found in leases of one particular kind. I said just now that only coal and iron mines had been referred to. Some of the evidence I have refers to quarries, not only in Wales, but also in other parts. In my own part of the county, where at present the production of tin is the great industry, and also in another part of Cornwall, where the production of china clay is the principal industry, there have been worse cases of exaction and tyranny than are to be found even in those parts with which hon. Gentlemen are more familiar. I use the word "tyranny" with deliberate purpose. I have made use of the phrase before in addressing my constituents, and I have been pretty well found fault with for so doing. But I say that tyranny does exist. There are cases in which those engaged in the china clay industry dare not meet on a platform to confer with each other and bring their grievances before Members of Parliament who are trying to redress such grievances. This is the case at this moment with persons who sink their capital and labour in the china clay industry in different parts of Cornwall. These people have told me they dare not come and meet me for the purpose of ventilating their grievances for fear that when their leases run out in a few years' time they would not be able to get renewals. These leases are sometimes of a most extraordinary character in respect of the stringency of their provisions. It is customary in Cornwall for these leases to be of 21 years' duration only. The ordinary lease provides that the tenant may erect such buildings as are necessary for the effectual working of the china clay deposit. Anyone acquainted with the industry knows that there is a great deal of work to be done in connection with the preparation of the clay—that it is not merely digging deep down into the earth to get the best clay, but that it is necessary to lay out a great deal of capital, sometimes £8,000 or £9,000, in the erection of kilns, tanks, and other works. The annual rent is almost invariably one of several hundreds of pounds, which, however, is usually merged in dues when the clay is being obtained and is producing profit. But here is the injustice of the system. Should the tenant or lessee not find the clay in sufficient quantity to enable him to pay the dues to meet the rent, the rent has still to be paid. And the dues or royalties, in the case I am referring to of the china clay industry, are even heavier than any that we have heard spoken of in connection with the iron and coal industry, because the charge is from 1*s.* 6*d.* to as much as 4*s.* per ton, and many hundreds and thousands of tons of clay exported from Cornwall fetch only 13*s.*, 14*s.*, or 18*s.* a-ton. At the end of 21 years—here is actually a quotation from one of these leases which I think is about as barbarous a piece of legalized confiscation as ever I came across—or sooner, if the lease is previously terminated, the tenant must leave the works, with buildings, sheds, engine-houses, shafts, water-courses, and everything except machinery and tools, in good and efficient order for the landlord to take possession of free, gratis, for nothing. ["Oh!"] Well, free, gratis, for nothing is not in the lease. This, as I said before, really amounts to a confiscation of the tenant's property—the property the tenant has himself created, and in regard to which, as has been pointed out, the landlord does not trouble himself to invest either capital or labour. There is another aspect of the question that I particularly wish to impress upon the House; and that is that in the event of the tenant's bankruptcy the lease is determined, and all the improvements which are made go to the landlord, just as if the lease had run out by the lapse of time. In such a case what happens? There may be other creditors; but the landlord exacts his rent or his dues, and the other creditors get no consideration whatever. Those other creditors may even have supplied the materials for building; but if the tenant has not paid for them, payment cannot be recovered from the property, even though the tenant is not in the landlord's debt. Then, the tenant cannot assign a lease without the consent of the landlord, and to obtain that consent very often a very high premium is charged. That is, generally speaking, a description of what happens in connection with the lease of a china clay estate in the Eastern part of Cornwall. Here are the facts of an exceptional case, certainly; but it shows what has happened in the past, and what may happen again in these particular cases. It is by the worst cases that you have to gauge the necessity for a reform of the law. Laws are not made for the purpose of regulating the actions of those people who are good, but to restrain the evil tendencies of those who are bad. In the particular case to which I wish to draw attention a lease was granted in the early part of 1873 to a person named Sargeant for the usual term of 21 years, the minimum rent being fixed at no less than £2,000; £2,000 a-year was to be paid for the first two or three years, and after that time it was to be £1,000 a-year to be merged in dues; and that £2,000 a-year the unfortunate man was compelled to pay in quarterly instalments and in advance. The dues were 3*s.* 6*d.* a-ton, and for every acre of land taken for the production of clay £100 was required. I may say in this connection that a great deal of the land—and I am speaking of what I know, for it is not long since I was over the land and examined it for myself—is mere waste, not worth 5*s.* an acre, much less £100. There are portions of the property that are cultivable, that have little farmsteads on them, and which are held under leases for life by an old lady. When I was speaking to her a few days since she informed me that, though the landowner was receiving £100 an acre for every acre of her land taken from her for the purpose of working this clay set, she had not received a single farthing of compensation. In the interest of these poor persons there ought to be some cheap means of having justice done them, as being the victims of that system. To conclude the facts of this particular case. This unfortunate lessee worked for three or four years, and spent £30,000 on engines and plant. I have examined the place where the clay is prepared and dried for export, and I found that everything was built in the most solid and substantial manner, of which no one can complain. The lessee went so far as to lay down two furlongs of railway to enable him to carry the clay from the drying sheds to the main line for export; in addition to that I understand he had to pay £100 an acre for making a road which ran across the line, and which was to be used in connection with the clay. Nearly two years after the working was begun the lessee began to return clay for export, and a considerable quantity was subsequently produced; owing, however, to an accident, the breakdown of machinery, and a violent storm which submerged the works, the cost of producing clay was so great that a very serious annual loss was incurred. Well, Sir, what happened? After spending £30,000 the unfortunate lessee found himself no longer able to pay in advance the proportion of rent which he was required to pay under the lease; he asked for grace for a few days; the answer, like that of Shylock, was—"No; I stand on the terms of my bond; I will have my pound of flesh;" the works were sold up for non-payment of rent; the amount produced by the dried clay did not exceed £650; the substantial plant and all the improvements became the property of the lessor, or, at all events, the lessee never received anything for them, and the lessee himself, broken-hearted, died in a foreign country. This, Sir, is a case where, owing to ruthless and harsh terms, a man who was doing his duty to his fellows by developing the industry of the country—by the way money was screwed out of him, and by relying too much on the generosity of a British landowner—was done to death. I do not think that any more forcible or conclusive instance than this is required in order to justify our demands that something should be done, and to convince us that we ought not to sit still and see our country going from bad to worse. I am aware that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been taunted this evening for being unwilling to admit that the country is going to the bad; but I think there is ample ground for hope with regard to the future, provided that these inequalities—these injustices—are removed. This is the chief matter which is agitating the country at the present time. I cannot imagine that anyone will deny that a remedy for these evils must be found, and that soon. My opinion is in favour of the remedy suggested by my hon. Friend, that a tribunal should be established which would deal with the question. It is an article of the Constitution that the subject who has a grievance shall have redress in a Court of Justice. If that is so, I fail to see why we should not get a remedy for our grievances, which are the result of the bad and obsolete Land Laws under which the country is at present suffering. Let us, therefore, direct our attention, with something like honesty, to this question. I myself am rather in favour of active legislation, founded upon evidence which is easily obtainable. It seems to me that any further discussion and inquiry will only lead to waste of time; and if any hon. Member in this House, or any hon. Member outside the House, can suggest any better remedy or any easier method of getting over our difficulties than the institution of a Mining Commission or a Mining Court, I shall be only too happy to render him whatever assistance is in my power to get such remedy adopted; but at the present moment I fail to see that the various grievances which exist, not merely with regard to rents and royalties, but also with regard to the arbitrary caprice of owners of land, can be dealt with better than by a Court of Justice established for the purpose of redressing them.

COLONEL BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince): Although I differ from much which has been stated from the other side of the House, I think there is no doubt that there are some conditions connected with mining by which the lessees have suffered which are the reverse of fair. With reference to the question as to mines belonging to the nation instead of private individuals, I must point out that if they were the property of the former, the nation would have to do with regard to them one of two things. It would either have to grant a concession to persons wanting to work the mine—that is, let it by favour, or it would have to let it to the highest bidder, and the matter would have to be settled practically by competition. I think that the reason why rents are higher here than they are in some other countries is because competition is less in those countries. If I am wrong I shall be glad to be corrected; but I believe we have royalties belonging to the Duchy of Cornwall and the Crown which are practically let to the highest bidder; but there are certain things in connection with mining leases, and one in particular, upon which I have very strong opinions—it is that, at the conclusion of the lease, even although all the mineral may be paid for and a large quantity of it not yet got, the landlord has power to re-enter and re-let the mine to the former lessee, or anyone else, as though he had never been paid for it. Now, if the landlord is the owner of the fee simple he may act generously in these cases; but if the estate is in trust, he is bound, as trustee, to get the most he can for it; he cannot be generous; and he is under the circumstances I have described bound, so to speak, to confiscate the mine. Well, Sir, I believe that is wrong; and, further, that from the fact that many estates are in trust, and that the trustee is obliged to act in that manner, a totally erroneous idea of what is right or wrong in the circumstances described has become current. The remedy which I suggest is, that the lessee should have the power in such a case to refer the matter to the Court of Chancery, if he can show that the trustee does not give him that equity which one would expect to receive from a landlord who is the absolute owner of a mine. That suggestion is one which, in my opinion, is worthy of the consideration of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department.

MR. WARMINGTON (Monmouth, W.): Sir, I believe that the royalties in this country amount to a sum exceeding £6,000,000 a-year. As a rule, the royalty owner pays no portion of the local rates and taxes, and at the same time the rent may be raised by him, whether or not the mine is successful. Thus it is that you find the royalty owner has become rich by exertions, and the expenditure of the capital of others, which have been wholly lost. The word "royalty" implies that mines and minerals were not always private property. We had one law with regard to them from France, where originally they were the property of the State. Private property in mines lasted only for about 100 years, and in the 15th century the State again took possession of all mineral property. There is no putting them up to auction in foreign countries, as suggested by the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite (Colonel Blundell); but, first, there is a licence given for exploitation, and when it is found that the mine can be worked a lease is granted, and a royalty not exceeding 5 per cent is paid according to the Code upon the net—not upon the gross—product. Well, Sir, that seems to me to be a rational way of settling the difficulty. Of course, it will be said that it is an interference with freedom of contract. But freedom of contract has been interfered with time after time in regard to landlord and tenant; certainly Gentlemen of the Conservative Party would not maintain that there was anything wrong in interfering between landlord and tenant, because one of the Acts of Earl Cairns was to interfere, in the most marked way, with a lease. If a man broke a covenant the lessor had power to turn him out and re-enter; but Earl Cairns considered that this was a most unjust confiscation, and now no such thing is allowed; and, therefore, I do not think that we need be frightened by any such bogie as freedom of contract. All we ask is that with regard to this large industry there should be a just proportion in regard to the royalties received, so that the royalty owner may suffer or gain according to the fortunes of the mine.

Mr. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): Sir, even at this early hour of the morning I feel compelled to say a few words on the Resolution of my hon. Friend. In speaking on this question, it is a pity that we are compelled to proceed upon somewhat unsatisfactory grounds or computations, instead of having before us what we ought to have and what we seek to have—namely, the real facts and figures necessary in dealing with this question. In my opinion, a real inquiry into the amounts of royalties paid, and the mode of paying them, is not only desirable but necessary, if we are to promote the welfare of the country; and there are several Members of this House who are anxious to see this question thoroughly inquired into. I believe that a thorough inquiry into the question would not only reveal the existence of a most iniquitous system, but it would also prove in an astounding manner how, by these royalties and lordships, and so forth, trade is impeded and impaired, competition discouraged, capital, in some cases, destroyed, and workmen compelled to work for wages thoroughly inadeqate to enable them to live in anything like comfort. It is this inquiry which, if my hon. Friends will pardon me, I would urge upon the Government of the day, and not a mild Resolution such as that which has just been moved by the hon. Member for Lanarkshire (Mr. Mason). The inquiry should take two forms. It should be directed to discovering the amount of royalties paid, and the mode of paying them. It has been stated here, in the course of this debate, that the amount of royalties paid to the coalowners in some cases exceeds the amount received by the coal-hewer. Well, let me take that point. Take a colliery where 300 coal-cutters are employed, together with the other men who are necessary to bring the coal out, and so forth. They will be receiving 1*s*. per ton of coal. They cut three tons a-day each. Three tons a-day each for the 300 coal-cutters will mean 900*s*., and 900*s*. between the 300 men will be to them 3*s*. each; but to the one landlord it means that he himself, for doing absolutely nothing, receives 900*s*. Within a stone's throw of where I live, in the Rhondda Valley, which is known to be the Metropolis of the South Wales coal fields, there is at the present time a colliery lying idle because the Company have failed to work it with profit to themselves and pay the landlord the royalty which he demanded, which was 1*s*. per ton for every ton of coal which was hewed in the colliery. The leaseholders asked that that amount should be reduced; but no, not he. Like his representative, the Shylock of old, he demanded his pound of flesh; and the Company was thereby prevented from continuing to work the mine, the capital was lost, and the workmen were thrown out of employment. The landlord can afford to wait. "Better times will come by-and-bye," he says, "and I can afford to wait." Then, perhaps, another Company comes along with more capital, and he is benefited, because they will have to pay him a dead weight as well as the royalties. There is no paying anybody or anything until the landlord gets his share. Within a mile and a-half of the Rhondda miners' office there are 10 collieries, and when trade is fairly brisk they produce daily 8,000 tons of coal between them. It is computed that the royalties paid to the landowners for the coal worked in South Wales is 9*d*. per ton for every ton of clean coal, although there is an hon. Member from West Glamorganshire (Mr. Yeo) who tells me that they are paying 1*s*. per ton for large and small alike, which is still more iniquitous. However, these 10 collieries are producing 8,000 tons a-day between them. The property belongs to three landlords. Eight thousand tons per day means £300 per day, meaning that these three landlords are dividing between them £300 a-day. £100 each per day makes £1,800 divided between them every six days. Every four weeks these three gentlemen divide between them £7,200, and yearly they divide between them the nice sum of £90,000 odd, or over £30,000 each. Multiply this by 10, and you will find that in 10 years these gentlemen have received over £300,000 each; and, I should like to ask, for what? The South Wales coal fields have been producing for nearly the last five years at the rate of 16,000,000 tons per annum. Sixteen million times 9*d.*—what does that mean? Why, nothing less than £600,000 divided annually between the few landlords who own the land from under which the coal is collected in South Wales. Multiply this again by 10, and you will find that these landlords have been dividing between them every 10 years no less than £6,000,000. The capital of the employer may go to the dogs; the workmen may starve; but these people must have their pound of flesh. In this manner, Sir, it is computed that the landlords of the United Kingdom receive between them, in royalties of all kinds, no less than £36,000,000 annually; and it appears to me to be a very reasonable question to ask, for what? What have the landlords done for it? Have they put the coal in the earth? If they have, then let them be paid fairly for their labour; but since it has been put there by an all-wise Providence for the benefit of mankind, I should like to know what right have the landlords to these enormous sums of money? Then, Sir, if an inquiry of the kind I suggest were held—if the Government of the day will consent to have an inquiry into the amount of these royalties, and into the mode of paying them—I believe it will be found that for once, to say the least, they have done great service to the whole of the United Kingdom. I hope the Secretary of State for the Home Department will, this evening, give us some enlightenment on this question, and will tell us that he proposes to give us some investigation.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I have listened with great attention and interest to the speeches which have been delivered on this question to-night, and I can assure hon. Members that I have taken the greatest interest in the subject, and I have had the advantage of a long consultation with the miners themselves upon it. I need hardly say, moreover, that my sympathy is very great with the distress which has undoubtedly existed in many parts of the Kingdom among the miners for the last two or three years. But the question now before the House is a very special one, and it is not one which can be properly argued out in five minutes, even if I were merely to state what the proposals are that have been made on the subject. The hon. Member who opened the debate (Mr. Mason) referred to an opinion which I am supposed to have expressed to the miners' deputation which waited on me in March last. Well, I must tell my hon. Friend quite distinctly that I expressed no opinion whatever. I listened patiently to all the deputation had to say, and I asked a number of questions. I was very careful to ask what remedy they proposed, and I must say that I found the greatest diversity of opinion with regard to the remedies which ought to be applied. Some were in favour of inquiry, but others said that inquiry would be merely dilatory, and that it was the duty of Her Majesty's Government to bring in a Bill; but when I asked what the enactments were to be, I found that really no two gentlemen agreed. In that sense, therefore, I did not receive much assistance from the deputation, although I did get a good deal of information from them in regard to the practical working of these collieries. But the real question, after all, in regard to the distress is this. I will state it to the House in a very few words, and I believe I am stating what is correct. Some 12 or 14 years ago there were much higher prices in the market for coal than there are now, and mining leases were entered into with avidity by capitalists, who thought they could make money. But these prices have fallen now, and they have fallen very seriously, and the result of that fall is this—that these capitalists, who, in some cases, put as much as £30,000 into their mines, find that they have lost their money, and that they cannot pay the rents which they contracted to pay with such avidity a few years ago. Everybody knows perfectly well that there was a perfect scramble for mining leases a few years ago, and the usual results have followed on the fall in the market prices. It is an exceedingly difficult question to deal with, and differs materially from the question of farm rents. It is not a question of whether or not small farmers ought to have relief, but whether large capitalists ought to be relieved from leases which they have voluntarily entered into. When the miners' deputation came to me upon the general question of the depression in the mining industry I listened to them very attentively, and I made the most careful inquiries from them as persons of very large experience on the question. I also promised them that I would make further inquiries on the subject, and I did so. Among other things I inquired into was the subject which has been mentioned to-night; and I found that there had been given to the Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade most important evidence on this subject, and reference was made to the very valuable evidence which had been given before them by Mr. Lowthian Bell, who is a gentleman of very great experience and an eminent authority, who had given them a good deal of information of the greatest value. What I have done, therefore, in view of these facts, is this. I have sent the whole of the notes which I made when the miners' deputation waited upon me, and the papers and statements which they gave me, to the Royal Commission, and it will be their duty to prosecute the inquiry further. When they have done so, and have communicated to Her Majesty's Government, and have laid before them the views which they have arrived at on the subject, it will then become my duty to make a statement to the House, and it will be for the Government to decide what action it is desirable to adopt. I do not agree with those hon. Members who think that the Government should at once bring in a Bill on this subject. I am not prepared to bring in a Bill at once. A Bill to carry out what hon. Members have said to-night may or may not be desirable; but it should not be brought in without very careful consideration. That inquiry Her Majesty's Government do not think it would be proper for them to make, but we have great hope that when we do get the Report on this question we shall see our way to bring in some measure to deal fairly with the subject.

Motion, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," by leave, *withdrawn.*

SUPPLY, — Committee upon *Monday* next.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (RETURNING OFFICERS) ACT (1875) AMENDMENT BILL.

(*Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Chance.*)

[BILL 211.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I have to move that this Bill be now read a second time. It is a Bill for the purpose of giving an appeal from the taxation of the expenses of candidates at Parliamentary elections by County Court Judges. Candidates at Parliamentary elections have found great difficulty in obtaining a taxation of their accounts. It is extremely desirable that taxation should be allowed, and that there should be a reference from the County Court to some tribunal superior to the County Court. I understand that it is considered that the Judge of Assize would be an undesirable authority for that purpose in England. I have consulted the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James), and I understand he would prefer a different Taxing Master. To that I have no objection. Since the discussion last Wednesday upon the Irish Bill I have thought it would be undesirable to move the Irish clause, pure and simple, without extending its provisions to England. If hon. Gentlemen object to its extension to England I shall not press it. I simply introduce it so that there may be no jealousy between the two countries. I hope the House will allow the Bill to be read a second time. I shall be glad to postpone the Committee for a week.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): It is well I should point out that this Bill is not even in print.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will allow me to explain——

Mr. CHILDERS: I have no doubt that it has been unavoidable, and it is because, so far as Ireland is concerned, there is no opposition to the Bill that I raise no objection to the second reading now. Of course, it is absolutely necessary that between now and the next stage any Amendments to the Bill should be very carefully considered. I understand that several hon. Members have Amendments to propose, and I have no doubt that the Amendments will be at once put on the Paper to permit of their proper consideration. Under the circumstances, and protesting that this must not be made a precedent, the Government will not object to the second reading.

Sir ROBERT FOWLER (London): I wish to call attention to the fact that the Bill has not been delivered. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will agree with me when I say that it is very unusual for the second reading of a Bill to be moved when the Bill has not been delivered. As my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Holmes) has no objection to the Bill, so far as it applies to Ireland, and as the hon. and learned Member (Mr. T. M. Healy) agrees to postpone the Committee for a week, I do not object to the Motion. I have no doubt that in Committee the Bill, as applied to England, will be very carefully considered.

Mr. CHILDERS: I presume the hon. and learned Member will agree not to take the Committee stage until Monday week.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Perhaps the House will allow me to say that I handed in the draft of this Bill on Tuesday, and that I was promised it should be delivered yesterday morning. It was only delivered this morning.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I object to this Bill being read a second time. It is very necessary it should be printed before we are asked to read it a second time.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: It is printed.

Mr. SPEAKER: The objection taken by the hon. Member does not necessarily preclude the Bill being proceeded with. The matter is one for the determination of the House.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I feel that it is quite possible we may be creating a dangerous precedent which may be applied to other Bills. This is an Irish Bill in form, but applies to the United Kingdom. Many Members have left the House in the expectation that the Bill would not come on to-night, seeing that it has not been circulated. I do not myself object to the measure on principle, if it is understood that it is to be so dealt with in Committee as to be made applicable to England; but there may be those who have objection to it under any circumstances.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* 24th May.

KITCHEN AND REFRESHMENT ROOMS.

NOMINATION OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Select Committee on the Kitchen and Refreshment Rooms do consist of Nineteen Members."—(*The Secretary to the Treasury, Mr. Arnold Morley.*)

Sir ROBERT FOWLER (London): I do not rise to object to the appointment of this Committee. The appointment of this Committee is a very delicate matter, and I know that it has been very carefully considered by the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Arnold Morley). At the same time, I wish to say that it does seem to me that 19 Members is a very large Committee to deal satisfactorily with the questions which will come before them. I hope the hon. Member will not consider the appointment of such a large number a precedent. This is a Committee appointed annually; and I trust that if the hon. Gentleman has the duty of proposing the Committee next year he will not think it necessary to nominate 19 Members because such a number was chosen this year.

Motion *agreed to.*

Ordered, That Mr. A. H. Acland, Mr. Biggar, Mr. Thomas Henry Bolton, Baron Dimsdale, General Goldsworthy, and Mr. John Redmond be added to the Committee.—(*Mr. Arnold Morley.*)

House adjourned at Two o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 17th May, 1886.

MINUTES.]—Sat First in Parliament—The Lord Forester, after the death of his brother.

Public Bills—*First Reading*—Customs and Inland Revenue * (112); Rivers Pollution Prevention * (114); West Indian Incumbered Estates * (115); British North America) * (116).

Second Reading—Infants (86); Incumbents of Benefices Loans Extension (89).

Select Committee — Church Patronage * (63), *nominated.*

Committee—Report—National Debt * (100).

Third Reading—Drowned Persons (Discovery and Interment) * (77); Burial Grounds (Scotland) Act (1855) Amendment * (78), and *passed.*

Provisional Order Bills—*First Reading*—Commons Regulation (Stoke) * (102); Commons Regulation and Inclosure (Totternhoe) * (103); Local Government * (104); Local Government (No. 2) * (105); Local Government (Poor Law) * (106); Local Government (Poor Law) (No. 2) * (107); Local Government (Poor Law) (No. 3) * (108); Local Government (Poor Law) (No. 4) * (109); Local Government (Poor Law) (No. 5) * (110); Local Government (Poor Law) (No. 6) * (111).

Committee—Report—Local Government (Ireland) (Fermoy) * (32).

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND).

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

Lord BALFOUR, in rising to ask the Secretary for Scotland, Whether it was the intention of Her Majesty's Government to propose any legislation with regard to the Universities of Scotland during the present Session of Parliament? said, he was prepared to admit that the present was not the most favourable time for obtaining the powers which they sought, having regard to the probabilities of legislation in "another place." But the question had now been pending for a considerable time, and he believed that a Bill would have been passed last year if it had not been for the opposition on one or two points. The measure which was brought forward last Session was an improvement upon its predecessor. It was not for the interests of the Universities that they should be kept in a state of uncertainty as to whether there should be legislation or not; and he hoped the Secretary for Scotland would be able to inform the country whether he intended to make an effort to pass a Bill during the current Session? It would be satisfactory to those whom it concerned to know that the Government had not lost sight of the matter. A Commission was now sitting on the subject of Educational Endowments, and they believed it would be for the public advantage that some questions in regard to bursaries should be dealt with at the same time. The powers of the Commission would expire towards the close of next year, and unless a University Commission were appointed during this Session or early next year the public interest would suffer. The present Commissioners hoped to obtain some advice and assistance from the University Commission; but they would not be able to wait much longer. That was his main reason for putting the Question to the noble Earl.

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (The Earl of Dalhousie): It is, of course, impossible to speak with anything like certainty as to what the Government may or may not be able to do during the present Session. It certainly is the intention of the Government, if possible, to introduce a measure dealing with the Universities of Scotland during the present Session of Parliament; but I am not at this moment in a position to say at how early a date we may be able to bring it in. I can say this much—that the terms of the measure have been for some time past under consideration, and that they have been, and are still being, considered with reference to many important suggestions that have been made from various quarters since this question was last before your Lordships' House, together with the recommendation of the noble Lord (Lord Balfour of Burleigh). The Government will bear that in mind, and endeavour to bring in a measure as soon as possible.

INFANTS BILL.—(No. 86.)

(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

The LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord Herschell), in moving that the Bill be read a second time, said, that a measure having for its object the amendment of the law relating to the guardianship of infants passed the House of Commons early in the Session of 1884, and came up to their Lordships' House towards the close of that Session. On the suggestion of Lord Cairns, whose loss he deplored very much, and who, he believed, would have been a supporter of the measure, it was considered too late to deal with it that Session, and on that ground the Bill was not proceeded with. In the Autumn Session of that year the Bill was again introduced by his noble Friend on his right, received a second reading, and was referred to a Select Committee. On that Select Committee were his noble and learned Friend (the Earl of Selborne), Lord Cairns, his noble Friend on his right, and other noble Lords. In the result the measure came back in a considerably modified form, and met in the House with other modifications. The Bill passed their Lordships' House, and was sent down to the House of Commons, where it received a second reading; but it was not read a third time, owing to the Prorogation. That Bill was, with one substantial exception, precisely the same as the Bill now before their Lordships. He would not argue on the justice of such a measure, except to say that, in a matter in which many of the women of this country took the deepest interest, a Parliament of men returned entirely by male electors should take care that no injustice was done to women. Even if they introduced a modification of the franchise, men would still form the vast majority of the electorate, and so long as they had the power in their hands they were bound to try to look at the question as women looked at it. They should look at the nature of the case, and dispose of it as justice demanded. The Petitions which had been presented, and which were not the work of any organization, but had come spontaneously from different parts of the country, showed that there was a deep and real feeling in favour of the Bill, and the letters he had received confirmed that view. The provisions of the Bill might be summed up chiefly as three. It was proposed that where the husband had not appointed a guardian to his children the wife became the guardian, and even where the husband had appointed a guardian that the wife became guardian jointly with the person so appointed. The Bill retained to the full the superior right of the father while living; but when the father was dead it was not considered just that the rights which he possessed while living could or ought to be handed over by will to another, so as to make the mother a stranger to the children. It was considered only right that the mother, to whose care the children owed so much in early years, should have a voice in the guardianship. The Bill then provided for another case. If the mother by will had chosen to appoint a provisional guardian on her death, if it could be shown to the Court that the father was not fit to be the sole guardian of the children, the guardian so appointed by the mother might be allowed to act jointly with the father, or as the Court ordered. That would not deprive a father who was fit to be the sole guardian of his right. There were many cases in which, though extreme unfitness could not be shown, yet it would be possible to show that the father was not fit to remain sole guardian of his children. In extreme cases of bad morals or indecency the Court had power to prevent a father acting as guardian of his children, and that power would remain. Then there was a provision to enable the Court, upon the application of the mother, to permit access to the children and to give instructions as to their custody. The Court was to have regard to the welfare of the infants, to the conduct of the parents, and to the wishes of the mother as well as the father, and such instructions might be varied or discharged from time to time as the Court might think fit. The only new provision was to the effect that in any case where a decree of judicial separation or divorce had been pronounced the Court might declare the parent whose conduct had been the cause unfit to have the custody of the children; and in such a case the parent so deprived would not be entitled on the death of the other to the care or custody of the children.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

Lord BRAMWELL said, that no provision was made in the Bill for costs of proceedings, though, as they all knew, there were such things as vexatious applications. As the law now stood, if the wife sued for divorce or separation, her husband was liable for the costs of her solicitor. He did not know whether that would be so in a case under this Bill. He thought it would be desirable that such provision should be made as to costs. It might prevent vexatious applications against the husband.

LORD ASHBOURNE said, he was glad to be able to support the second reading of the Bill, as he thought that in its present shape it was very much improved. He thought, however, that it would require to be closely and carefully examined in the Committee stage. He referred chiefly to Clause 2, which was almost the principal clause in the Bill, and which seemed to be an absolute statement that no matter what her condition or her conduct the wife was to be the guardian of the children.

LORD HALSBURY said, he would urge that there should be proper safeguards in the Bill to insure the fitness of the guardian appointed by the mother.

EARL BEAUCHAMP was glad that Clause 7, refused last year, had been introduced into the present Bill; but he thought that the powerful reasons which induced the promoters of the Bill to restrict the sole guardianship of the mother in that clause were also applicable in restraint of the power of appointment given in the first paragraph of Clause 3.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR said, he thought the point raised by his noble and learned Friend near him (Lord Ashbourne) was really met by the provision in Clause 6, by which the Court might not only remove a testamentary guardian, but any guardian under this Bill, wherever it would be deemed to be to the welfare of the infant. As to the suggestion of his noble and learned Friend on his right, he could only say that he would carefully consider the matter.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2ª accordingly.

MALTA.—RESOLUTION.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH moved for—

> "Copies of all correspondence having reference to the Maltese nobility which has been addressed to or has emanated from the Colonial Office since August 1883, up to the present date."

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Earl GRANVILLE), in assenting to the Motion, said, he had just laid the Papers on the Table, by command of Her Majesty.

Motion *agreed to.*

Copies or extracts of correspondence with reference to the Maltese nobility (in continuation of [C.-3812.], August 1883):

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

INCUMBENTS OF BENEFICES LOANS EXTENSION BILL.—(No. 89.)

(*The Duke of Buckingham.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (The Duke of BUCKINGHAM), in moving that the Bill be read a second time, explained that its object was to remove difficulties which the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty found themselves in in regard to the repayment to them of the loans which had been made to incumbents of benefices. The Bill proposed to enable the Governors to meet the difficulty by extending the time of the mortgages, and to reduce the payment of the instalments by a considerable amount, without diminishing the security. The reason for the introduction of the measure was the great fall that had taken place in the value of the glebe lands on which the loans were secured. In the case of one benefice, the income of which was nominally £325 per annum, it was now reduced to £250. In another case an income of £672 was represented by a yield last year of £265; and in a third case, where the income was stated at £361, only £181 had been realized.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Duke of Buckingham.*)

THE EARL OF POWIS said, he considered that the only question was how far the term should be extended. He was afraid that the extension given by this Bill might create a hardship in some cases where the incumbent would have to pay instalments on a mortgage created years before he had come into the living. There were very few cases in which the works in respect of which the loans were granted would last 50 years.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY (Dr. BENSON) said, he hoped that their Lordships would read the Bill a second time. The extension which was prayed for in it was very necessary, and involved no alteration in principle. Thirty years had formerly been calculated as the time within which loans were to be repaid; but owing to the late depression in agriculture it had been found that 30 years was not a sufficiently long period, and one extension had been already granted. Owing to the continued depression the extension then granted was not sufficient, and there was a necessity for the extension for which the Bill asked.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House *To-morrow.*

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART — THE WORKS OF MR. WATTS, R.A.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS, in rising to ask the Lord President of the Council, Whether any arrangements had been or were about to be made for the satisfactory exhibition and safe custody of the valuable works of Mr. Watts, R.A., which he had so generously given to the nation? said, that in putting his Question on the Paper he had had two objects in view. In the first place, to find out whether accommodation of a satisfactory character could be given for these pictures; and, in the second place, he had been anxious to call attention to this noble gift on the part of Mr. Watts, R.A., and to obtain from Her Majesty's Government some public recognition of it. As regarded the custody of these pictures, he hoped that his noble Friend the Lord President of the Council (Earl Spencer) had found some means of accommodating them at South Kensington; but with regard to their safe custody, though he had no doubt that his noble Friend would tell them that there were hydrants and fire engines, &c., he feared that he would not be able to say that they were in a fire-proof building any more than our National Collection in Trafalgar Square. His main object, however, was to call attention to this very noble gift on the part of Mr. Watts. He thought that whoever was conversant with Mr. Watts's works could not fail to have understood and appreciated the high ideal he had always set before himself, his lofty sentiments, his poetic conceptions, and the noble purposes to which he had devoted his art. Of his art it might truly be said that it was imbued with the truest, purest spirit of the Greeks, and that his poetical conceptions are embodied in the noblest forms, remarkable no less for their beauty of outline and anatomical correctness than for the purity and chastity of his treatment of the nude. And if he (the Earl of Wemyss) were to point to one of Mr. Watts's great works which more than another successfully embodied on the canvas his mind and genius, and was typical of his art, he would point to that grand allegory of "Love and Death," where the helplessness of love was shown, when, struggling at the portal with outstretched arm and battered wings, it vainly strove to stay the onward march of the dread messenger and his entrance into the loved one's home. The character of Mr. Watts's art, and his power of successfully embodying his poetical conceptions and high ideal, were due, first, to the innate genius of the man; but he (the Earl of Wemyss) thought he would himself tell them that his success was not less owing to his having been a constant and devoted worshipper at the shrine of Phidias, before the noblest representations of human form of which the world was cognizant, and which were to be found in the Elgin room of the British Museum. That gift was one of great generosity, especially having regard to the fact that Mr. Watts was far from being a wealthy man; and he hoped that the Government, speaking on behalf of the nation, would express their sense of his signal liberality and public spirit.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Earl SPENCER) said, he had great pleasure in answering the Question of the noble Earl (the Earl of Wemyss), because he shared with his noble Friend the warm admiration which he had expressed for the works of this distinguished artist. It was, however, necessary that he should explain what had occurred in the matter. Some time ago he received a letter from Mr. Watts, stating that he was considering whether he should offer to the nation some of his works, and he asked him (Earl Spencer) whether he could hold out any encouragement to the idea? As President of the Council, he replied that he felt sure the nation would regard with gratitude so munificent an offer as this coming from an artist whose fame was so great, and he added that the Privy Council, and he himself (Earl Spencer), would do all in their power to promote the object he had in view. Subsequently he had an interview with Mr. Watts, and an experienced official of the Museum consulted Mr. Watts as to how his wishes could best be carried out. There was another characteristic, in addition to that mentioned by the noble Lord, belonging to Mr. Watts which he wished to mention. Besides his high artistic characteristics, he was a man of great modesty and diffidence, and he said he should like these pictures to be placed in some position where the public might see them and then form an opinion whether they were worthy of acceptance by the nation. There were two classes of his pictures—those of an ideal character, which were of great eminence and beauty, and could only be produced by the highest genius in Art; and those which were portraits, possessing not only great artistic merit, but great historic value to the country, as representing distinguished men of the present age. It would be of the utmost importance to the nation to possess these. Though he could not speak officially on behalf of the Trustees of the National Gallery, he could say that, however anxious they might have been to find a place for these pictures, they were absolutely precluded by the fact that they had no room. But at the South Kensington Museum he believed they could offer an excellent position for showing these pictures; and if Mr. Watts was satisfied with it, then it was to be hoped that he would carry out his munificent intention. A debt of deep gratitude would be due to him for his valuable gift and for the spirit in which it was made. The offer had not been absolutely made; but the noble Earl might rest assured that the authorities of South Kensington would do all in their power to further Mr. Watts's views and to secure these valuable treasures for the nation.

RIVERS POLLUTION PREVENTION BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the Rivers Pollution Prevention Act, 1876—Was *presented* by The Lord Balfour; read 1ª. (No. 114.)

WEST INDIAN INCUMBERED ESTATES BILL [H.L.] (NO. 115.)

A Bill to provide for the determination of the Acts respecting the sale and transfer of incumbered estates in the West Indies: And

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA BILL [H.L.] (NO. 116.)

A Bill respecting the representation in the Parliament of Canada of Territories which for the time being form part of the Dominion of Canada but are not included in any province: Were *presented* by The Earl Granville; read 1ª.

CHURCH PATRONAGE BILL [H.L.]

Select Committee on: The Lords following were named of the Committee:—

L. Abp. Canterbury.
L. Abp. York.
M. Salisbury.
E. Selborne.
E. Iddesleigh.
V. Cranbrook.
L. Bp. London.
L. Bp. Durham.
L. Bp. Peterborough.
L. Harris.
L. Leigh.
L. Aberdare.
L. Monk Bretton.

The Committee to meet on *Tuesday* next, and to appoint their own Chairman.

House adjourned at Six o'clock,
till To-morrow, a quarter
past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 17*th May*, 1886.

MINUTES.]—SELECT COMMITTEE—Forestry, Colonel King-Harman and Mr. Sellar *added.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*Second Reading*—Government of Ireland [181] [*Third Night*], *debate further adjourned.*

Committee—Medical Acts Amendment [163]—R.P.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL—*Ordered*—*First Reading*—Tramways (No. 3) * [213].

QUESTIONS.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION—THE SECOND REPORT.

MR. LEWIS FRY (Bristol, N.) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, Whether the Department has had under its consideration the recommendation contained in the 2nd Report of the Royal Commission on Technical Instruction (pp. 522 and 538), that the limit of amount of, and the conditions attached to, grants in aid of buildings for local Science Schools and Art Schools should be revised; and, whether the Department propose to take steps for carrying into effect the recommendations of the Commissioners on this subject?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Sir LYON PLAYFAIR) (Leeds, S.): The recommendation of the Royal Commission on Technical Instruction, in regard to building grants for local Science and Art Schools, has received my attention, and I propose to direct the attention of the Lords of the Treasury to the recommendation. It rests with the Treasury whether effect will be given to it.

SCOTLAND—SHERIFF IVORY.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) asked the Lord Advocate, From what source and under what authority Sheriff Ivory obtained a copy of a telegram from "Macmillan, Portree," to "Mr. Cameron, Reporter, Uig," dated 7th November, 1884, and published on page 21 of Sheriff Ivory's Report to the Commissioners of Supply of Inverness-shire; and, on what authority Mr. Ivory describes the Mr. Cameron in question (a Glasgow newspaper reporter temporarily in Uig on professional business) as one of the leading agitators in Skye, and a person engaged with the crofters in deforcing the police?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): The copy of this telegram was obtained from the Post Office officials in Edinburgh, upon a written authority signed by Mr. Macmillan, the sender. I assume that any observations regarding persons made in the Report are founded upon information obtained in the Island, and particularly in the inquiry referred to.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—THE EDUCATION CODE—EXAMINATIONS.

MR. MILDMAY (Devon, Totnes) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, Whether the Articles of the Education Code require that children failing on examination in one elementary subject of the standard must, at the next examination, be presented in a higher standard, though such children have not passed in the lower standard; and, whether, as such provision has the effect of preventing such child from working half time or whole time, some modification can be made in the Articles of the Code, allowing such children to be presented again in the standard in which they have, by failing in one subject, failed to obtain the necessary certificate, allowing them to work half or whole time as the case may be?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Sir LYON PLAYFAIR) (Leeds, S.): According to the Code a child should be presented in a higher Standard each year, unless there is some reasonable excuse for exceptional treatment. Failure to pass in one out of three subjects is not generally considered a reasonable excuse. But this rule as to representation has nothing to do with the children working half-time or whole time. A child can work half-time or whole time as soon as he passes the Standard prescribed by the bye-laws of the district. I am not prepared to make any such change in the Code as that proposed.

ARMY (INDIA)—ROYAL ENGINEER OFFICERS.

MR. HOWARD SPENSLEY (Finsbury, Central) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether any action is to be taken with regard to the disadvantages as to pension and compulsory retirement under which Officers of the Royal Engineers serving in India, but on the Imperial List, labour, as compared with Officers of the same corps borne on the Indian List, and Officers of the Indian Staff Corps?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): The Indian List of Engineer officers is an expiring list, and its members have exceptional privileges under the Parliamentary guarantee, which will not be continued to their successors on the Imperial List. Under a recent Warrant Engineer officers can in certain circumstances elect permanent Indian service, in which case they obtain special privileges as to retirement and pension.

INDIA (FINANCE, &c.)—DEPRECIATION OF SILVER.

COLONEL HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he will lay upon the Table of the House, for the information of honourable Members, Copies of the Communications that have been recently addressed by the Financial Secretary in India to the Treasury in regard to the depreciation in silver in that Country?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby) said, the despatch from the Government of India reached the Treasury on March 17. The hon. and gallant Member would understand that there had been a good deal of work lately at the Treasury with reference to the Budget; but the answer to that letter, which dealt with a difficult and complicated subject, was in preparation. It would soon, he hoped, be settled. When it was settled, if the Government of India consented, they should be ready to lay the Correspondence on the Table of the House.

PUBLIC HEALTH (METROPOLIS)—THE ISLE OF DOGS.

MR. HENRY GREEN (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) asked the Chairman of the Metroplitan Board of Works, Whether it is a fact that, during the past fifteen years, there have been frequent overflows of sewage matter into many of the houses on the Isle of Dogs; and, whether, notwithstanding the oft-repeated complaints made by the sufferers through the local Poplar Board of Works, as well as to the Metropolitan Board of Works, nothing has yet been done to effectually abate this dangerous nuisance?

SIR JAMES M'GAREL-HOGG (Middlesex, Hornsey): I am sorry to say, in reply to the hon. Member, that for several years past the basements in the Isle of Dogs have been subject to occasional flooding during excessive rainstorms upon a flood tide; but the Metropolitan Board are now taking measures for the erection of a pumping station in the Island, and have accepted a tender for the engines required. The station would have been commenced before this but for the difficulty experienced in acquiring land for the purpose, to do which it was necessary, after the failure of negotiations, to obtain the Home Secretary's consent to compulsory purchase, in accordance with the powers given by Parliament to the Board.

BOARD OF WORKS (IRELAND)—PAYMENT OF FINAL INSTALMENT OF A LOAN.

MR. TUITE (Westmeath, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Irish Board of Works have neglected to pay the final instalment of a loan granted 25th October 1883, under "The Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881," section 31, to William Dunne, of Kildollan, county Westmeath, notwithstanding several applications on the part of the tenant; whether, on the 22nd May 1885, the Secretary of the Board of Works wrote to Mrs. Dunne (William Dunne having died in the meantime) stating that, "as soon as she obtained probate of her husband's will, the final instalment would be advanced;" and, whether, although probate has since been forwarded, the amount still remains unpaid?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.) (who replied) said: I beg to inform the hon. Member that the facts are as stated in his Question; but that between the date of the Board of Works letter—22nd May, 1885—and the completion of the deed, the necessity, by Treasury Rules under the Land Law Act, for producing the rent receipt had arisen, and that Mrs. Dunne, although informed of this, and reminded that this was one of the covenants of the deed, has not seen fit to comply with the Rule. The moment she produces the rent receipt to May, 1885, the fourth instalment will, as she has been informed, be advanced.

STATE OF IRELAND—THE ARMING OF ULSTER.

MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If his attention has been called to the following advertisements in *The Belfast News Letter*:—

> "Rifles. Tenders required for 20,000 Sniders in good order, with Bayonets or Swords, to be delivered, carriage paid, on or before June 1, in Lots, at certain stations on Northern Counties Railway, as may be required by Purchaser. Address Vigilance Committee, 8335, Office of this Paper;
>
> "Wanted a few Men thoroughly competent to instruct in Military Drill. The Drill Instructors must not be in receipt of Pensions from the Government;"

and, whether any notice will be taken of the matter?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The Irish Government have no information that would lead them to suppose that there is any serious meaning to be attached to the advertisements to which the hon. Member calls attention. A person in earnest on such a subject would hardly have recourse to an advertisement in a paper in Belfast, where, I believe, there are no arms factories. I may point out that the unlicensed carrying of arms in a proclaimed district, and also the assemblage of parties for the purpose of drilling, are offences known to the law. The Constabulary are well aware of their duty regarding these offences, and do not at present apprehend any difficulty in carrying it out should the necessity arise.

CURRENCY, &c.—GOLD COINAGE.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he has had under consideration any plans for the re-instatement of the gold coinage of the Country at its proper value, and for meeting its deterioration, estimated by his penultimate predecessor in 1884 at £500,000, and continually increasing; and, whether he has arrived at any conclusions on the subject?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt) (Derby) said, he had had this question under his consideration, but he was not able at the present time to announce any definite conclusion on the subject.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—JOHN TAYLOR, RATE COLLECTOR FOR A DISTRICT OF THE LURGAN POOR LAW UNION.

Mr. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether complaint was made on the 6th instant, to the Clerk of the Board, that John Taylor, who is a rate collector for a district of the Lurgan Poor Law Union, served "wrongfully filled notices upon ratepayers for the purpose of depriving them of having votes;" and, whether the Local Government Board will hold an inquiry into this matter?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, he could not answer the last Question. The notices to which the hon. Gentleman referred in his printed Question were made out in the clerks' office from the rate-books. The sole duty of the collector as distinguished from the clerk was to deliver the notices at the addresses they bore. In one case it was represented to the clerk by the person concerned that the form was made out in the wrong name. The clerk altered the form and the rate-book accordingly, and the collector had nothing to do with this matter. He (Mr. John Morley) considered it was not necessary to hold an inquiry.

Colonel WARING (Down, N.) said, as his name had been mentioned in this matter, he might state that the person referred to was not in his employment, and had no connection with his estate.

VENEZUELA—THE TERRITORY OF THE YURUARY.

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If the British Vice Consul at Ciudad Bolivar (Venezuela) has jurisdiction over the Federal Territory of the Yuruary; and, if not, if the Foreign Office will extend the jurisdiction of Mr. Reddan (the present Vice Consul), as large and increasing interests are involved in that Territory?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): The British Vice Consul at Ciudad Bolivar has no jurisdiction at present over the territory named. The question has, however, been under the consideration of the Secretary of State, who is now in communication with Her Majesty's Representative at Venezuela as to the best mode of extending the Vice Consul's jurisdiction.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—PUNISHMENT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN.

Mr. HERBERT GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, Whether the Teachers of Board Schools have the power to inflict punishment for absence from school on children whose parents have explained and excused such absence?

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir Lyon Playfair) (Leeds, S.): This is a Question as to a possible case which has never been brought under the consideration of the Department and with which I have not been called upon to deal. When it occurs I shall give it my attention, and inform the hon. Member in regard to it.

NAVY—H.M.S. "COLLINGWOOD"—BURSTING OF THE 43-TON GUN.

Sir HENRY TYLER (Great Yarmouth) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether any inquiry has yet been instituted into the recent failure of the 43-ton gun; and, if so, whether he could state the names of the gentlemen appointed to act on such inquiry; and, whether any Report has yet been made to the War Department on the subject;

or, if not, when such a Report may be expected, and whether it will be made public?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) (Stirling, &c.): The subject has been referred to the Ordnance Committee, under the Presidency of Lieutenant General Sir M. Biddulph, R.A., with Rear Admiral Ward as Vice President. The other members are—for the Navy, Captains Hammill and Jenkyns, R.N.; Military members, Major General Fraser, Colonels Baylay and Davies, and Major Colquhoun; Civilians, Professor Barlow and Sir Frederick Bramwell. For the purposes of this inquiry there will be associated with the Committee Sir William Armstrong, Sir Frederick Abel, Colonel Maitland, Captain Noble, and a representative of Sir Joseph Whitworth's firm. The Committee will be requested to expedite their inquiry as much as they conveniently can, and when their Report is received it will be for further determination what subsequent steps may be requisite. With regard to the publication of the Report, I would prefer to reserve my opinion until I have received and considered it.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA—THE JOINT COMMITTEE.

Mr. JAMES MACLEAN (Oldham) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If it is the intention of the Government to proceed this Session with the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the administration of British India?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): The hon. Member is aware that the Motion is blocked, and I do not know whether the noble Lord will be good enough to remove the block.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): Certainly not.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I am very sorry to hear that. Then, Sir, there is only one course I can take. I do not think it is quite respectful that the matter should be handed on from week to week; but, on the other hand, it would be very difficult to stop the debate on the second reading of the Irish Government Bill; so that I think the best course we can take is, that on Thursday I will put down the Order for the Indian Committee as the second Government Order, in the hope that we may very probably, as often happens, close the debate before half-past 12 o'clock.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Has the attention of the First Lord of the Treasury been drawn to the fact that all the Conservative Members of the Committee, with the exception of one, have withdrawn their names from the proposal to serve on the Committee, which raises the question whether the Order remains in the same form?

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: That I think is very unfortunate indeed; but I hope if those Members have withdrawn others may be found to fill their places.

Afterwards,

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE said: I find the Order cannot be put down before Monday, as it stands for that day; but on that day I propose to place it in such a position that we may have a good prospect, I hope, of getting to it. And with respect to the composition of the Committee, I think the time for considering that will be when the House has considered and determined what the number of the Committee shall be.

SPAIN — THE COMMERCIAL CONVENTION.

Mr. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether, under the new Spanish Convention, Spain grants to Great Britain the most complete favoured nation treatment in all that relates to trade and navigation, or whether the grant is not for the most complete favoured nation treatment, but is limited to be co-extensive in amount of benefit with that accorded to France and Germany; whether, if the grant is thus limited, merchandise carried from the United States to Porto Rico in United States vessels will be liable to less duty than if conveyed by British ships; what nations, if any, have more favourable treaties with Spain than those to be accorded under the Convention to England; and, what are the additional benefits enjoyed by them?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): As the new Convention, when brought into force, will give to British subjects the same benefits as are now enjoyed by French and German subjects under the Treaties of those countries with Spain, and as French and German subjects enjoy, in matters of trade and navigation, the same treatment as nationals, it is clear that British subjects will enjoy the same advantages as Spaniards themselves. In some of the Spanish Colonies, however, there exists special local regulations affecting commerce to which the Treaties with France and Germany are made subject. Should it appear that, under any such regulations, Great Britain, although enjoying the same privileges as France and Germany, will be less favoured in Porto Rico than the United States, Her Majesty's Government will endeavour to have any such inequality removed. Under the Convention, as it stands, British merchandize will be largely benefited by paying duty in the Spanish Antilles under the 3rd instead of, as at present, under the 4th column of the Spanish Tariff. No nations have any more favourable Commercial Treaties with Spain than these whose benefits England will enjoy.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—SCHOOL BOARDS AND VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS.

MR. CONWAY (Leitrim, N.) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, Whether honourable Members are to understand from the Correspondence laid upon the Table of the House in connection with the Dan-y-graig (Swansea) School, that Article 18 of the Education Act of 1870 gives to School Boards the exclusive right to provide all future Elementary School accommodation, so that it is only by concession on their part that new Voluntary Schools can be opened; whether what is believed to be the present practice of the Department (as illustrated by Letter 38 in the Correspondence alluded to), namely, to defer to the opinion of the School Boards, even when it differs from their own, is in conformity with the Act; whether the Education Department can shift on to a School Board the responsibility of declaring a school to be unnecessary; whether the conditions of Article 8 apply at all times when the erection of a new school is contemplated; and, whether the converse of Article 98 of the Act of 1870 is so that unless they themselves consider a school to be unnecessary, they are bound to give it grants?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir LYON PLAYFAIR) (Leeds, S.): By Section 18 of the Act of 1870 a school board is bound to provide a sufficient amount of school accommodation in their district. If the rates become burdened for this purpose, the Department only admit other schools to participation in the annual grants on the acquiescence of the school board which has provided the deficiency. The Education Department have no power to shift, and do not shift, any responsibility on to a school board. The conditions referred to in Section 8 do not relate to the question whether a school shall have annual grants. I am not sure that I understand the Question as to the converse of Section 98; but if it means that the Department is bound to give annual grants to every school which they consider necessary, the answer is in the affirmative.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER — VENTILATION OF THE HOUSE.

SIR HENRY ROSCOE (Manchester, S.) asked the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works, Whether it is a fact that the Metropolitan Low Level Sewer running down the Embankment possesses no ventilating shaft from the point at which the drainage of the Palace of Westminster passes into the low level sewer to a second point nearly 800 yards distant at York Gates; whether all competent authorities have laid down that every main sewer should have one ventilating shaft at least for every 100 yards of its length; and, whether, in this case, he will take steps to have the said sewer properly ventilated, and thus to remove much of the danger to the air of the House of Commons by reason of the passage of sewer gas from the low level sewer of the Metropolitan system into the main drain of the Palace?

SIR JAMES M'GAREL-HOGG (Middlesex, Hornsey): In reply to the hon. Member, I beg to say that there is no ventilating shaft on the low level sewer between the Houses of Parliament; but the Engineer of the Board, Sir Joseph Bazalgette, does not concur in the opinion that every main sewer should have a ventilating shaft for every 100 yards. This must be governed by the circumstances in each case; the main sewers, for instance, which have large quantities of water running through them want ventilation the least, and this was exemplified by actual experience on the 16th of April, when an examination of the low level sewer in the vicinity of the Houses of Parliament and of part of that draining the Houses showed that the low level sewer was almost free from smell, and had no air current or pressure of air in it, while, on the other hand, there was found to be a current of air upon opening a side entrance into the sewer, and foul smell was found to proceed from the sewer draining the Houses of Parliament which had no air current in it either way. Under these circumstances, I am not prepared to admit the necessity of additional ventilation in the low level sewer, the danger referred to arising, to all appearance, from the state of the sewer draining the Houses of Parliament; but at the same time I can assure the hon. Member that the Board will give careful consideration to any representation made to them on the subject.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL.—[Bill 181.]

(*Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Attorney General.*)

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

[THIRD NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [10th May], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*The Marquess of Hartington.*)

Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed.*

Sir R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton) said, notwithstanding all that has fallen from the Prime Minister on the subject, I thoroughly agree with words that fell from the Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) to the effect that this Bill for establishing for the first time a Legislative and Administrative Body in Ireland is the gravest and most startling fact of political life, and that it is a totally new departure. I am here to contend that it is a departure on the wrong road, and that though it may be for the government of Ireland, it will not produce good government in Ireland. I think I can show from the provisions of the Bill that Her Majesty's Government greatly distrust the Body which they propose to create. There are several clauses which the Prime Minister stated on introducing the Bill were intended for the protection of the minority; and he gave as his reason for inserting them that the political history of Ireland had been peculiar for a long time. He said there had been one long train of internal controversies, and therefore he was bound in that state of things not to leave the minority to stand up for themselves, as would ordinarily be the case in other places. These provisions were, therefore, introduced for the purpose of their protection. I take it that two essential features of good government may be taken to be these—first of all the security of property, and next the impartial administration of justice; and to these I may add a third, mentioned the other night by the hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Leatham)—namely, the greatest freedom of action compatible with the safety of the State to every individual in the Kingdom. It is with regard to these three essential points of good government that the Prime Minister has attempted to introduce clauses to provide for the safety of the minority. When the provisions are examined with care they will show that very great distrust existed in the minds of the Prime Minister and of his Colleagues as to the way the new Parliament would act if it were left alone on certain subjects. The first of these provisions, for which protection for the minority is introduced, is the question of the land. The second provision relates to those who have been concerned in the administration of justice—Judges and the Civil servants of the Crown. The third refers to the position of the Protestant minority and questions affecting education and religion. I will confine myself to two of those subjects, which are sufficient to illustrate what I have to say. The hon. Member for Sheffield who closed the debate on Thursday (Mr. Bernard Coleridge) stated that, in his opinion, the question of the land required an independent Legislature to be established in Ireland. The question of the land requires very serious consideration. I do not propose to enter upon an examination of the provisions of that Bill, because I should be out of Order in doing so. It is sufficient for me to say that that Bill is lying upon the Table of the House at the present moment, and that it proposes to take the land from the Irish landlords and to compel this country to make an advance of £50,000,000 to the State. That fact is sufficient to show that the Prime Minister and his Colleagues are not willing, in the interests of the landowners of Ireland, to leave them to the tender mercies of the new Legislative Body which they are about to create. The Prime Minister himself has said that it would be an ill-intended kindness or an ill-shaped kindness that would allow the new Legislative Body to deal with the land at first. The action of the Government in this matter, therefore, is the strongest argument that the creation of this new Legislative Body will be not for the good government of Ireland. Then I come to the second provision referring to those who are connected with the administration of justice in Ireland and to Civil servants. What is it you propose to do with the Judges in Ireland? You propose to protect them by stating that, if they choose, they may retire on pensions at once on their full salaries, or they might accept the retiring salary which they would receive if they had served their full term of Office. And why is that done? It is done because the Government are apprehensive that in consequence of something they may have done they may suffer at the hands of the new Body which they are going to create. But you have done more. You have stated that the Judges in Ireland, although you are going to create this new Legislative and Administrative Body, are still to retain that which they have at present—namely, the security which the Imperial Parliament gives them that they cannot be dismissed from their Office without the consent of the Houses of Lords and Commons. Why is this? What have the Irish Judges done that they need this protection? They have done that which the English Judges have done. No one will accuse them of having administered anything but the most impartial justice. We do not know whether the administration of the law is to be carried on in the future as in the past; but it is quite clear from this division of the Bill that you dare not trust the Irish Judges to the tender mercies of the new Irish Legislative Body, and thus you surround them with the protection you propose. What is the reason which the Prime Minister himself alleges for taking this course? He told the House, in introducing this Bill, that the Irish Judges had come into uneasy relations with the popular influences in the country, which are about to become the predominant influences of the country. The Judges, therefore, for the righteous judgments they have given, and because they acted in what the Prime Minister's own words he termed "the service of the State," must, in the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman, be protected from the vengeance which may be poured upon them by the predominant popular influences which they may have offended. How are the new Judges to administer the law? In the first place, it will be necessary for them so to administer the law that they will not come into conflict with popular influences, otherwise they will come into uneasy relations with the predominant power in the land. There is, however, no test like the money test, after all, to see whether you can trust these people. Some of the new Irish Judges are to be in a different position from the others. The moment you come to touch the British taxpayers you are obliged to surround them with safeguards. The fiscal relations between Great Britain and Ireland are so enormous that it becomes absolutely necessary that the Imperial Parliament should retain some hold over the Irish Exchequer. Why do you suppose we are to maintain some hold upon these Judges? Do you suppose they will not give the best judgment in their power? You are bound to trust them, but, according to your own statement, you will not do that, because it is supposed that the Irish Judges will not give just decisions in matters relating to the fiscal arrangements between the two countries, because they will be too much under the control of the predominant influences; and, therefore, it is proposed that the new Irish Exchequer Judges shall be appointed in the future, not like the other Irish Judges, but by the Lord Lieutenant in conjunction with the Lord Chancellor, not of Ireland, but of Great Britain, and that they shall be dismissed from their Office, not like their brother Judges, by an Address of the Irish

Legislative Assembly, but by an Address of the Houses of Lords and Commons of the Imperial Government. Therefore, in the future there will be two sets of Irish Judges, sitting side by side in the Civil and Criminal Courts, one of which will be protected by the Imperial Parliament, and the other left to the tender mercies of the newly-created Legislative Assembly. It is quite certain that the Judges who are not protected by the Imperial Parliament will have uneasy relations with the Irish Parliament. These safeguards framed on behalf of one set of the Judges show an absolute distrust by the Government of the action of their new Legislative Body. Besides the landlords and the Judges there are many other persons who have been engaged in the administration of justice in Ireland, who will be left without any protection whatever. There are those, for instance, who have done their duty like men—the jurors, who are much more likely to suffer for their actions than even the Judges themselves. If the Government have this distrust in their newly-created Legislative Assembly, why do they propose to hand over to their tender mercies the 1,400,000 loyal citizens of the North of Ireland, without affording those citizens any such protection whatever? I maintain that those loyal citizens are entitled to the protection of the Imperial Parliament. Do you fancy that because you pass this Act national controversy will cease in Ireland, and that Ireland will no longer consist, as it does now, of two nations, two religions, and two races, with whom you will have to deal? In these circumstances, I maintain that the Imperial Parliament has no right to forsake its duties, and to hand over the protection of these persons to any Body that may be created in Dublin. I should like, while I am upon this question of handing over our Imperial duties to a Parliament in Dublin, to make a quotation from a speech made no later than last November by a right hon. Gentleman who knows thoroughly all about Ireland, and who has himself been Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman). The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "We desire to extend to Irishmen the full benefit of any system of local government which we enjoy ourselves, and to give them the control of their own affairs the same as we have ourselves. But when we come to the question of giving them a separate Parliament and a separate Government, then I confess I see great difficulty, and I do not think that this is likely to be conceded to them by any Government, either Whig or Tory, because it would not be consistent with the maintenance of the Empire or our duty to the Crown."

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): I am afraid I must repeat what I said the other night when the same sentence was quoted by one of the right hon. Gentleman's Colleagues, and, lest it should be quoted by others, I may repeat it now. It is this—I have read the whole of the speech, which I presume they have never seen, and although I quite admit that the words quoted are stronger than I should like now to endorse, and I quite admit that this individual sentence was an indiscreet expression, yet, if the right hon. Gentleman will read the whole of my speech, he will find that it is not inconsistent in its gist and tone with the attitude that I have now adopted.

SIR R. ASSHETON CROSS: I may tell the right hon. Gentleman that I have read his speech, and it appears to me that the words which I have read gather up the whole of its meaning. As to this being an indiscreet expression, I take it it was the individual expression of the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman at that time, before his opinions became somewhat corrupted by his present associations. Now, Sir, I pass to another point. I maintain that this is a bad Bill, because there is no element of finality about it. The Prime Minister stated the other day that if any Bill was to be good it must be one which promised a real settlement of the Irish Question. The right hon. Gentleman also said that the necessity for the Bill arose from the fact that there was a Radical sentiment in Ireland not in sympathy with the law. My belief is that quite independently of the landlords there are a large number of Roman Catholics in Ireland who would be glad to see the law enforced. I entirely deny the truth of the assertion that there is a Radical sentiment in the people against the law. Of course, if you go for Irish opinions to the agitators and the Irish-Americans, and to the opinions expressed, I am sorry to say, by some hon. Members below the Gangway, I agree with the Prime Minister, such a statement of Irish sentiment would be fair enough. If these are the persons from whom you are to take Irish opinions, then the people of Ireland are not only not in sympathy with the law, but there is a Radical sentiment in Ireland which is not in sympathy with Great Britain. The aspirations of those persons are practically for separation, and it is not likely that those persons will be satisfied by any of the limitations laid down in the Bill or by the restrictions with which the Bill is hemmed in. These restrictions and safeguards will be only fresh points for agitation, and no finality can be expected from the Bill. If the House will allow me, I will quote a few words from a speech made by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) at Castlebar recently. What were they but words of intimidation—that Ireland was not to be under foreign or any other control? [*Cries of* "No, no!"] I am quoting the words of the hon. Gentleman. The last words will explain what I mean; they are his words, not mine —namely,

> "That the Irish had a right to guide their course throughout the nations of the earth not subject to any control."

And I say their aspirations are not satisfied by this Bill, and that those aspirations cannot be satisfied by this Bill. Leaving the hon. Member for Cork, I will come to the more accurate but equally significant language of the hon. Member for Longford (Mr. Justin M'Carthy), who has written *The History of our own Times*, and who has used words quite as strong if not spoken in such strong language. A discussion was taking place as to what question in Irish politics required to be settled first and what questions afterwards. The hon. Member then observed that the first question was the national government of Ireland, not local self-government—that was the way he put it—that was the question above all others which should be first; and he said that if you settled that by the Act then every other question would soon settle itself. With those warnings before us, can anyone for a moment suppose that this Bill will be a final settlement? The hon. Member for Mayo (Mr. Dillon) said that the Irish people would accept this Bill if certain modifications were introduced into it, those being the same which were shadowed forth by the hon. Member for Cork. One of the points which the hon. Member for Cork had stated in his opinion required modification was the fiscal question—the taking of Customs and Excise out of the hands of Irish Authorities; and yet that was one of the matters which the Prime Minister had declared to be a vital principle of the Bill. [Mr. GLADSTONE: Not a vital principle.] All I can say is, that the Prime Minister put that as a vital principle of the Bill, for I took the words down at the time they were spoken. It is very hard indeed to find out what the vital principles of the Bill are. The Prime Minister, at all events, is reported as having put that as a vital principle of the Bill, and whether he has changed his mind or not since I cannot say, because it is difficult to follow the mind of the right hon. Gentleman. It was put forward by the Prime Minister that there should be fiscal union between Great Britain and Ireland, and the Customs and Excise were to be retained in the hands of this Parliament and not handed over to Ireland. But one of the first modifications pointed out by the hon. Member for Cork as being necessary was the question of the Customs and Excise, and, following that, the contribution that they were to pay to the National Exchequer. Even if the Irish Members were able to give assurances now as to the acceptance of this Bill by the Irish people, I doubt very much their power to secure its acceptance by the Irish people. They are only here as instruments in order to get what they can, and when they go back to Ireland they will be pressed on and on as the leaders of other revolutions have invariably been, and we shall find a short time after that the moment this Bill passes—though, in all truth and honesty, I hope it never will pass—we shall find it used as a vantage ground from which further demands will be made, and if the Prime Minister is in Office as a means of extorting further concessions. Can anything be more calculated than the Prime Minister's speech the other night to stir up fresh agitation against the Union? He made some very strong observations denouncing the way in which the Union was brought about. I am not going to defend the way in which the Union was brought about. It is no duty of mine to defend the means by which that Union was effected and brought about. [Mr. GLADSTONE: Hear, hear!] The Prime Minister cheers that; but let me tell him that if the Union was brought about by bribery, he himself has now offered a considerably larger bribe—that of £50,000,000—to get this Bill through; and it is not the first time the right hon. Gentleman has offered a bribe to this country, and it will not be the first time that the bribe has been refused. Some time ago he offered to bribe the country by taking off the Income Tax; but the country rejected the bribe, or I do not know what position we should have been in now if it had been accepted. In his speech the Prime Minister not only denounced the way in which the Union was brought about, but he used words which certainly offer a justification and an encouragement to further agitation. He used these very remarkable words. He said—"It is not my duty at present to advocate the disturbance of the Union." [Mr. GLADSTONE: I never said any such thing.] I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that he used those words, and I have the report in my hands. I will show them to the right hon. Gentleman. He said—

> "You call this repeal of the Union; you must allow us at least to have an opinion on that subject. For my part I am not prepared at this moment to say that subject should be re-opened."

The right hon. Gentleman, therefore, very clearly used those words, and he cannot say that in stating he was not prepared at the present moment to re-open the question of the repeal of the Union he was only referring to modifications, because he afterwards spoke of modifications in his address. I say, Sir, that those words throw out hopes to the Irish people that if they press strongly enough they can obtain repeal of the Union. But the question of separation is one which we can never allow to be entertained in this country. The interests of the two countries are so interwoven, and the national exigencies are so great, that we cannot allow them to be separated, and must always resist the demand to repeal the Union. That is the whole point of the Bill. The geographical situation of Ireland and the manner in which the two countries are joined in community of interest are stronger arguments for maintaining the Union than the 86 Irish Members, the Legislative Body it is proposed to create, or even the weakness of the Prime Minister, are arguments for repealing it. What we contend for is the supremacy and the Sovereignty of the Imperial Parliament. Why we want to retain the Irish Members within the walls of this House is that because without them we shall cease to be an Imperial Parliament. It would be the Imperial Parliament of Great Britain, but it would not be the Imperial Parliament of the three United Kingdoms. Some confusion has arisen from talking about the unity of the Empire; what we want is to maintain the unity of the Three Kingdoms, and thus secure the freedom of the Empire, and if we once let Ireland go these objects are destroyed. You may devise any scheme you like for the purpose of bringing the Irish Members here, but it will make no difference. The Prime Minister himself has stated that it passed the wit of man to devise a scheme for keeping Members from Ireland in this House for Imperial and not for local purposes. The Prime Minister made several propositions for bringing the Irish Members here for the purpose of discussing Imperial affairs; but does he see the difficulties that must necessarily arise? The Government, having thought the matter over a long time, has put forward the four propositions made by the Prime Minister, which only make the matter worse. The truth is that the Bill makes the Legislature in Dublin into a Parliament co-ordinate with our own. The 103 Members are to come over from Ireland when summoned here for certain purposes; but their mode of election, the franchise and everything else, is left to the Irish Parliament; and, therefore, instead of representing the opinions of the Irish people, they will really be delegates of the Irish Legislative Body. They would not be here to express their free opinions as we do, but they would come here for one particular purpose. Are our proceedings to be delayed till they come, and when they come who is to decide whether the question to be discussed is an Imperial question or not? If we should have a Prime Minister and a Government carrying on to the satisfaction of the people of England and Scotland all these domestic and foreign affairs the Irish Members might come over at any moment, and by some vote might put that Ministry in a very large minority. What is to happen in such an event? Are the Ministry of this country, possessing the confidence of the English and Scotch peoples, to be turned out because the Irish Members have come over and defeated them on some particular question? So in questions of taxation. The Irish Members might carry some Resolution that they would not contribute to our extra Customs and Excise. Yet this vital question of the unity of the Empire would be in danger. But it is idle to discuss all these propositions, because if any plan could be devised by which the Irish Members might come over for an express purpose that is not what they desire. What we say is that the power of this Parliament should be supreme, and if the Irish Members are taken away from it this Parliament cannot be supreme. The Irish Members here justly boast that Ireland is an ancient and a proud nation, and thought that their wishes may be fairly met by this House. The Scottish people have presented to-day a Petition signed by 100,000 inhabitants to show what they think of this matter. The Scotch are as ancient and as proud a nation as the Irish, and they have had their differences with this country; but the Scottish nation and our own are so closely woven together, and their interests are so much the same, that the Scottish people are determined to maintain the Union. But the Scottish people have not lost their individuality of temperament or their individuality of character, nor have they in many cases departed entirely from their customs and their laws. But the Irish, although an ancient and a proud nation, are a warm-hearted and a generous people; and I believe that by a fair but generous administration of the law, and by showing to them that we are willing to consider any just grievance which they have—[An hon. MEMBER: Just now]—yes; and for years and years, the time will come when they will, like the Scotch, see it to be their interest to be united with us as they are at the present moment, and that the Parliament should be the free and supreme arbiter and the supreme protector of the liberties of every subject of the Queen within the Three Kingdoms. We have had quoted by the Prime Minister Resolutions passed in foreign parts, which may, perhaps, tickle the vanity of the Prime Minister himself; but we are not accustomed to consult those Powers when we regulate our own affairs. There are, I do not doubt, a vast number of Irish in America who are willing to tell us that it is our duty to do this, that, and the other, and that if we do not we must take the consequences. But we will not alter our laws at their dictation. I am sorry we have been told, in the course of these debates, that if this measure does not pass we shall have fresh outrage, fresh disaster in that House, and great difficulties to deal with; but we are not accustomed to alter our laws either because there has been an explosion at Clerkenwell, or because we are afraid that outrages may follow. This is the supreme Parliament. It is strong, and because it is strong it will never abuse that strength. This supreme Parliament knows how to be just and how to be generous; but strong and powerful as this Parliament is, there is one thing which it cannot afford to do, and that is to be afraid.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. STANSFELD) (Halifax): The speech of the right hon. Gentleman divides itself into two parts. In the first place, he dealt with certain portions of the subject which will be more properly dealt with after we have passed the second reading and got into Committee on the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman spoke first of the provisions with regard to the question of the land. It was, he said, a matter of observation that the provisions of the Government in this respect were evidences of mistrust. But I would say that, as far as we are concerned, they are not evidences of anything more than the reasonable mistrust which Irishmen themselves might also entertain. They are no evidences whatever of an amount of distrust which would render it improper or hopeless to introduce the principle of self-government into the Irish nation. We all know that not only within our time, but far beyond and behind our time, the land has been the critical question in Ireland. We know the feuds which have obtained between the land-owning and the land-occupying classes in Ireland, and it is no unfair reflection upon the Irish people, and upon a Legislative Body representing that Irish people, to say that it would be better and fairer for them as well as for the land-owning class that we in this Imperial Parliament, together with the Irish Representatives, should first settle that question and get it out of the way. Then the right hon. Gentleman spoke about our distrust because of the precautions taken with regard to the Irish Judges who had made themselves unpopular in the country. Well, we do not, any more than the right hon. Gentleman, ignore the recent facts of history. We know that many of these men made themselves unpopular; we know that some of these men were supposed to be in danger of their lives. We do not class every Irishman, or every Irishman of the same Party, within the same category—as the right hon. Gentleman almost seemed disposed to do—as persons guilty of offences of violence or intimidation. But we think it is only fair to all parties concerned that we should take these precautions, even though they may be considered excessive precautions, and it is not a fair argument, and it is not an argument of weight, that the House of Commons ought to reject this great measure on the second reading because of these supposed evidences of distrust. The right hon. Gentleman opened his speech in that way, and he went on to what I may call a large and general principle, and I am prepared to say that in that part of his speech he made many statements which have my agreement, and some which have my sympathy. The right hon. Gentleman was, to my mind, a favourable exception to some of those who have made speeches of late, in the tribute which he paid to the personal character of the Irish people and of the Representatives of Ireland. And I agree with him in perhaps the strongest proposition which is the basis of all his policy and his objection to the Government measure. I agree with him that, if this Bill cannot be treated and believed in as a final measure, it is a Bill not to be approved by the House of Commons. The Irish Representatives who sit below the Gangway tell us they will accept it in that spirit, and I have the weakness to believe in those Irish Representatives. But I believe in something else and something more. I believe in those general conditions which will of themselves make this a final settlement, and I believe in the national aspirations of the Irish people. The right hon. Gentleman has said that the Leaders of the Irish Nationalists, like the leaders of other revolutions, will be compelled to go further. We had this argument from the noble Lord the Member for Middlesex (Lord George Hamilton) the other night, and he brought to bear the old saying that the revolution devours her children. The noble Lord forgot that the revolutions of which that used to be said were violent and bloody revolutions—revolutions suddenly bursting forth in some moment of popular frenzy consequent upon a long and cruel repression, and in which the people's will and the people's vengeance found no limit. But in this case we are not dealing with the question of a revolution, even of a peaceful revolution. We are propounding and we hope to succeed in passing a measure of peaceful reform. You may say, and you may logically argue, as the right hon. Gentleman has done, that this measure will not be final, and will not satisfy the Irish people; but you cannot logically argue that this measure of peaceful reform, whether wise or unwise, is to be classed in the category of sanguine revolutions, and that it must bring calamities in its train. I confess it is not easy at this moment to regard the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, with its moderate tone, as representing or indicating the new point of departure taken by the Leader of his Party. I read to-day with nothing short of amazement a speech delivered by the Leader of the Tory Party, rivalling and excelling in calculated recklessness any speech ever uttered by either Nationalist or Orangeman. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] I hope to prove this before I have done, for I have taken notes on that subject which I will read to the House. The noble Lord insulted the Irish people by saying that they were not a nation. I know no deeper insult to a people inhabiting a country than by words, or sneers, or jeers to deny their nationality. Well, the noble Lord said—"They are not a nation; they are two nations." Is it possible that a man of common sense can utter such words? Two nations! There is only one nation, forming the great mass and majority of the Irish people. There is a small minority of another faith, towards whom we have obligations, because we placed them there, and who have rights which we are bound to protect and to defend. But this minority practically exists only in a part of the Province of Ulster, and whatever may be their merits, their character, and their vigour, they are undoubtedly too few to be called in any sensible meaning of the expression a nation of themselves. Then the noble Lord went a little further. He said he could not confide in the Irish people. He did not state which of the two Irish peoples he could not confide in. I do not suppose that he confides in either, because they are a good deal mixed, and there are a good many Celts in Ulster. The noble Lord thinks that the Teutonic race can alone be trusted; and the Irish people, in his view, ought to be put into the same category, though not necessarily at the bottom of the scale, with Hottentots and Orientals. The noble Lord then used an expression rather too conversational for so serious an accusation. He said—"That Irish Members of Parliament will swear anything you like." I heard it said the other night, on a Bench below the Gangway, that the Irish promises must be met with disbelief, and I regretted that statement; but the Leader of the Tory Party goes further, and says that he will not believe them on their oath. [*Cries of* "Question!"] That is, and will be, the Question. The Leader of the Tory Party sounded his battle cry on Saturday. He has made his appeal to the country—an appeal which it is his policy to precipitate. I thank him from a Party point of view for the nature of that appeal, for whatever may be thought and felt on that side of the House, whatever may have been thought or felt among some hon. Members on this side, I am convinced that when this appeal is carried by the Press throughout the length and breadth of the land it will rouse a spirit of indignation, a spirit of determination and of union among the Liberal ranks which will leave us little to fear for the future. Hon. Members opposite believe that the cleavage of the Liberal Party is an accomplished fact, and the Leader of the Tory Party thinks that the time has come when he may safely snap his fingers at the Liberal Party. He seeks to rouse the fighting spirit of his own Party, saying—"We will accept their assistance, but not trust in it; we will trust in our own right arm alone." [*Opposition cheers.*] I am glad that that sentiment is cheered, because the way in which it is received may a little open the eyes of some of our own Friends. Then the Leader of the Tory Party did us another service, greater still; he propounded a policy, one for which we have sought, and begged, and prayed for months past on the part of our critics and opponents. And what is that policy? It is this—that Parliament should enable the Government to govern Ireland resolutely—and we know and you know what "resolutely" means—for a period of 20 years—20 years of continuous Conservative Government and coercion and oppression. Then, when that shall have been accomplished, what will be the grand prize coming within our vision? Why this—"that the Irish will then be fit"—for what? For self-government, for autonomy? Nothing of the kind—"for such measure of local government as we may choose to give them." But the benefits which the noble Lord showered upon us are not yet exhausted. There is one more to come. He has a practical policy in substitution for the Land Purchase Bill. He does not want to buy out the landlords; he does not want to save their property for them; he wants to spend the money on the emigration of 1,000,000 of the depleted Irish population. [*Opposition cheers.*] Whatever the noble Lord's Party may think of that policy—and in spite of their cheers I do not think they are at all delighted with it—we, at least, have no occasion to find fault with it. I say that the noble Lord has by his speech rendered the greatest service to the Liberal cause, that he has done more for the unity and success of that Party than even my right hon. Friend (Mr. Gladstone). Now, Sir, if I do not weary the patience of the House, I will proceed to deal, in plain and simple language, with the principle, the policy, and the tendency of this Bill. I want to address myself specially to the noble Lord (the Marquess of Hartington) and the right hon. Gentlemen who have gone from us; and I hope, now that they know that 20 years of coercion is the alternative to our policy, that they will extend to my argument a favourable consideration. I agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) that we have two things to deal with at the stage of second reading—first, the principle of the Bill; and then its method and tendency. The principle, Sir, is autonomy, and I am delighted that my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham is an enthusiastic supporter of the principle of autonomy. His objection is simply to the method of the Bill and to the tendency consequent upon the method. I will endeavour to answer my right hon. Friend later on. I wish first to say a few words with reference to the able and dignified speech of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James). I propose to tell him my interpretation of the Bill, and to ask him whether he will not reconsider some of his apprehensions. My right hon. and learned Friend seems to have come to the conclusion that the Bill as it stands would destroy the unity of the Kingdom and the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. I venture to deny the accuracy of that conclusion entirely. What does the Bill do? It delegates from the Imperial Sovereign Parliament a certain limited portion of its legislative powers to the Irish Legislative Body to be created. But it preserves the right and power and points out the method of reconsidering at any moment that delegation. Now, it is impossible to argue that this is a loss of the Sovereignty of this Parliament. In case of any measure being passed by the Irish Legislative Body which might go beyond the limits imposed by this Bill the measure of my right hon. Friend, following the well-known example of the United States in their Supreme Court, sets up the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council to interpret and decide upon the Constitutionality of those Acts, and whether they are or are not within the powers conferred by this Bill. Well, is it not evident that you do not abrogate or cast away beyond recall the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament, but simply suspend the exercise of its Sovereignty—of a portion of its Sovereignty. I am making a statement of the legal and Constitutional operation of this Bill, and if anyone is to answer me, I hope it may be someone who has some knowledge of the law. I do not expect that any Member of the Legal Profession will say that I have made an inaccurate statement. The Imperial Parliament will remain supreme and sovereign, even after the Irish Members have left, and they know it will. In case it desires to reconsider that delegation of powers, or even to recall it, it has ample power to do so, and to reconstitute the delegated authority by resummoning the Irish Members, and you will find your own Imperial Parliament which meets here to-night reconstituted to consider without prejudice and without being hampered in its decision the whole question *de novo*. [*Opposition laughter.*] We are accustomed to hear laughter from the Benches opposite. It is not particularly courteous. But even that is not all. It is not so easy to destroy the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. If this Bill passes you will not even destroy the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament with respect to the Act itself. You can repeal it the next day, and that is known to the Irish Members. My right hon. and learned Friend (Sir Henry James) shakes his head. He will not deny that this Imperial Parliament is now sovereign and supreme, and that the only power we take from it is the power while this Bill lasts as an Act, if it passes into an Act, which it delegates to the Irish Assembly. If the Act is repealed the delegation ceases. Of course, I admit that no such step would ever be taken by the Imperial Parliament, because by the 39th clause we enter into what is called a Parliamentary compact, an arrangement of honour, not to exercise our sovereign power except by a certain method which is pointed out in the clause. It only comes to this—that you suspend the exercise of a limited portion of the Sovereignty for reasons of policy which you will have approved if you pass this measure, and that having done that you cannot immediately legislate day by day upon questions of Irish concern. But what you can do, if you think it worth while and necessary, is to reconstitute the Imperial Parliament in order to reconsider the delegation which you conferred. I have stated what undoubtedly is the belief of the Government as to the interpretation of the Bill; and I can only say that if my right hon. and learned Friend in Committee shall be able to show us that there is any legal flaw in the drafting of the measure, and that it does not carry out precisely that which I have said, the Government will be perfectly ready to amend the clause. I am glad now to see my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), and I shall be surprised if I fail to make some impression upon him with regard to one of his views upon this question. My right hon. Friend has said that his objection to the method and tendency of the Bill is that it proceeds upon the lines of Colonial independence, instead of proceeding, as it ought in his opinion to have done, upon the lines of federation. Well, Sir, I entirely deny the accuracy of that view. I say that this Bill does not go upon the lines of Colonial independence or upon the lines of federation. It proceeds precisely to the point of the parting of the ways; and when it comes to the parting of the ways it absolutely bars the way to Colonial independence and leaves open the way to federation. They cannot go beyond this delegation, which is nothing like Colonial independence or independence of any kind, but is a very limited delegation of powers to the soil of Ireland alone; and the way is barred to any further modification of the Bill, or to any enlargement of its powers, unless you resummon the Imperial Parliament in the full possession and plentitude of its powers and of its numbers. I want to know, therefore, how this measure can be said to be on the lines of Colonial independence? The Bill, however, does not bar the way to federation, which is a favourite scheme of my right hon. Friend. It actually leaves the door open to federation. We have heard from many hon. Members below the Gangway opposite that, though what they desire is to get home and set to work upon the arrears of legislation and of government, still they are open to accept that, and not unwilling at some time to resume their place in this Imperial Assembly. Well, how does it open the way? Suppose this Bill passes, can anything prevent the British Parliament, which will be left, from applying the federal principle to legislation upon the affairs of England, Scotland, and Wales? My right hon. Friend cannot argue that the Irish Legislative Body could impede our action in that respect. If it should occur to him to put his scheme into form, and if he should succeed in carrying Parliament and the country with him, there would be no possible difficulty from a legislative point of view. On the contrary, he would simply find part of his work was done already, and that there was a Legislative Body established in Dublin very similar to the Bodies which he would seek to establish in the other countries under different names. But my right hon. Friend has said that he finds it difficult to be satisfied unless that principle of federation is incorporated into the measure itself, and is carried out at the present time. Well, then, I do not agree with him, for more reasons than one. First of all, I am of opinion that it is better that the Irish Members should be absent from the Imperial Parliament for a period. I think they will find quite enough to do at home; I think we should find enough to do at home; and if they and we are to come together again it will be done more hopefully, and my right hon. Friend himself will have a better chance of carrying his federation scheme, if it is postponed until after the construction of a Legislative Body for Ireland. We have heard that this measure has been sprung and come as a surprise upon the country. There is no doubt that a great many minds have been taken by surprise, and a great many more have not been able to travel quite at the pace of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. There is nothing we dislike more than being driven beyond our pace. But if that has been a surprise, and has made a difficulty to my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham, how much greater would have been the difficulty and surprise if we had added to this Bill a scheme of federation? I agree with him that there is no fear of separation; I agree with him that there is no fear because of the geographical position of Ireland; but it is precisely because I hold separation to be impossible, to be even inconceivable, to be the dream of dreamers who are not the Irish Nationalists, but the Tory Party, and, unfortunately, some of our Friends on this side of the House—it is for this reason that I say you may, with the utmost confidence and safety, extend these rights and privileges and advantages of self-government to the Irish people, and hope for a truer, because a moral, Union with this country. Why, the fact that Ireland is in favour of autonomy is hopeful. If you look to the facts of her insular position and her history—the long history of conquest, of oppression, of misery, and neglect—if you look to the conflict of races, and, further, if you look to the poverty of her population, to her weakness compared with our strength, I say that the dream of separation is a fantastic dream. I say there is only one condition under which the Irish Representatives could indulge in that dream, and that is the condition of lunacy. There is only one condition under which Ireland could accomplish separation, and that would be if Ireland were loosed from her moorings, and drifted 1,000 miles away into the broad Atlantic. I think we can look at the question without fear from that point of view. Perhaps I may be permitted to say a few words as to my personal connection with the Government of the right hon. Gentleman. I am only a recent addition to the Government, and I can almost speak as if I still sat below the Gangway. I looked at this matter from the point of view of our duties—a threefold point of view. First of all, I regarded it as a duty to satisfy the national sentiments and aspirations of the Irish people, and to consolidate the unity of the Realm; and I set my position no less high with regard to the latter than to the former. I admit also that we have a duty to the landlords of Ireland. It is no evidence of any undue distrust of the Irish people to say that it is better that the first question on which they would have to embark should not be the vexed one of the relations of the landlord and tenant. And then we have a duty to the Protestant community of Ireland; I cannot call it a nation. I cannot agree with Lord Salisbury in the use of that phrase; and I regard it as about the most weighty and condemnatory testimony that could be borne against us, that our former rule of Ireland has led now at this moment to the existence of a portion of the Irish people so divided from the rest, so hostile, so unsympathetic, so unbelieving, that no spark of Irish patriotism, as it would appear, is kindled in their breasts by the prospect of being enabled, under this system of autonomy, to contribute directly to the prosperity and progress of their country. Well, Sir, although I regret their action and their attitude in this way, it does not in the slightest degree reduce our responsibility or duty to see that justice is done to them. When that, as I hold with other persons, is their condition of mind—which I lament and deplore—and while I regard it as the result of our past misgovernment, I say we are bound to consider it. But I hope that they, or some of them, have not yet said their last word. I hope there may yet be some evidence from them of satisfaction at the prospect of the people of Ireland becoming a united people, and that they may yet take their place in the future of Ireland; but in the meantime we are bound to accept the responsibility of dealing with their objections and their fears. It is impossible for us beforehand to anticipate what they may say, or suggest, or propose. We do not share their fears. That is a subject on which men may well differ, for that is a part of the great conception of this measure. We believe that the time ought to come and be near at hand when all Irishmen, Catholic and Protestant, in every Province, may live and work in harmony together. And now I come to the last question—the last subject on which I shall venture to trespass on the time of the House. Our first proposition is that all contrary policies are disastrous and complete failures. I admire the courage of men who, after what has happened with Coercion Acts—I am amazed at the courage, if I can call it courage, of any body of men, in these days, who can with a light heart embark upon a policy of another 20 years of consistent and persistent coercion and repression—I am amazed at them when they look forward in the fond, but, as I think, foolish belief that at the end of that time, during which they have continued that policy, they would have reconciled the Irish people to the acceptance of any measure, not of autonomy, but of local government, that they may choose to confer upon them. We offer this Bill; we say it is necessary to satisfy Ireland, and why? The conditions of Ireland and of her history have produced in the minds of her sons an intense patriotism. It may be a narrow and an antagonistic patriotism, but the feeling is based on her geographical position and her past history. The result of her sufferings and our misgovernment in the past has been the expatriation of millions of Irishmen. That expatriation has created another and a larger, a freer, a richer, and a more powerful Ireland beyond the Atlantic; and the new fact that you have to deal with now—and it would be foolish if you were to ignore it—is that you have not merely a poor Ireland of 4,000,000 or 5,000,000, many of them half-starving, with no chance or prospect against the enormously preponderating powers of this country, to deal with, but an Ireland two or three times that number in the United States. Well, it is impossible that that fact should not have its effect. It has produced its effect on the Irish mind. It has inspired them with new hopes, with new determination, and with a consciousness of which they were never capable before, that their demands cannot be for ever refused. How, then, are we to meet that as sensible men? Why, we must satisfy, if we can, that Nationalist aspiration. That aspiration which we call patriotism is implanted in our breasts for no poor purpose. It is providentially there. It cannot be destroyed without danger to the State that attempts to destroy it. Why, there are very few of us whose youth carries us back beyond the Revolutions of 1848 who do not recollect the lessons then taught. I have often spoken freely on this subject of nationality. [*Opposition cheers.*] Yes; and I believe in nationality. I say that nationality is individuality, and it demands to be respected. But the United Kingdom is a group of these Nationalities, living as individual members of one family. You must live in harmony as one family; but you must give and take. You must respect each other. You must not have an absolute and Draconian Code; and the very same principle founded upon the characteristics of human nature applies as well to the government of nations as to the government of families. We are told that if this Bill passes we shall hand over the government of Ireland to American-Irish. Well, let them look at opinion in America. I do not ask you to look at the opinion of the Irish-Americans. Look at the opinion of native Americans. Why, the enormous mass of American opinion is in favour of this Bill; and the conviction is that it will satisfy the desires for national existence of the Irish people. We are told that by this measure you will put Irish government in the hands of the American-Irish. I hold, on the contrary, that the effect will be precisely the reverse. This is a Home Rule measure, and the first effect of Home Rule, the first manifestation of it upon the enactment of this Bill, would be a resolve on the part of the Irish people that the affairs of their country should be governed by Irishmen, resident in their native land, and not by those living some thousand miles away. I have spoken of the impossibility of separation, and I have said that I agree with the right hon. Gentleman. I am almost bound to make one reservation. If it were possible to conceive so serious a danger, it seems to me that if a policy of refusal of all concession for 20 years, with coercion in the meantime, were to be adopted and applied to this unfortunate country, it it not impossible that before the end of 20 years, in some moment of England's sudden and unexpected danger and weakness, an enemy might be found at her side. [*Home Rule cheers and ironical laughter.*] Yes, I repeat it; obstinate injustice and oppression will make an enemy in time of any people. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has been accused of basing his policy on the words of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). My right hon. Friend is too experienced a man to base a great policy like this—["Oh!"]—whether right or wrong, it is a great policy—upon the word of any man or of any party or section of men. For men and Parties may be transformed and pass away. Such a policy can only be rightly or safely based on the consideration of permanent conditions which seem to justify and point it out as the only sound solution of the problem. It is our conviction that those permanent conditions, with regard to the Irish people in Ireland, point to Home Rule. They point to it as necessary to satisfy the Irish mind, to benefit the Irish people, and they point to it as safely grantable consistently with the unity of this Realm. But though my right hon. Friend would be wrong in basing his measure on the word of any man or of any number of men, it is permissible, I think, to note the change of tone which has come over so many Members of the Irish Nationalist Party. [*Ironical laughter from the Opposition Benches.*] The Leader of the Tory Party says they will swear anything; and, therefore, I do not expect his followers to be in the slightest degree convinced or affected by the argument I am now advancing. But I ask this—Is there a man in this House, on either side, who can have listened to such speeches as those of the hon. Members for Mayo (Mr. Dillon), South Londonderry (Mr. T. M. Healy), Wexford (Mr. J. Redmond), and South Tyrone (Mr. W. O'Brien), without believing in their sincerity? We knew before of the power and the eloquence—and they have shown remarkable power and eloquence—of the Members of the Irish Nationalist Party in this House; but we all recognize—even the noble Lord the Member for West Middlesex (Lord George Hamilton) recognized the other night — the changed tone and the changed voice. There was in their speeches the evidence of moved hearts. There was evidence of a new born hope, of a new promise, and a greater faith; and I see the cause, and this House sees the cause, and the country will see the cause. The cause is the message of peace on the lips and the olive branch in the hand of my right hon. Friend. Of all his great life, of all the work of his great career, I believe that in some future day this will be his highest praise. I believe that, whatever happens, he will have done all that man could do towards the reconciliation of the Irish and the English races. For myself, I believe in nationality, and I believe in Irish nationality. I believe that its recognition is possible, and easy within the limits of the union of this Realm. I believe when we have recognized and accepted it, we shall leave of it nothing that is not beneficent and safe. I believe of it that it can and will, and that only it can and will, bring about a lasting and a moral union between Great Britain and the people of Ireland.

MR. KING (Hull, Central) said, that if he objected to the Bill it was not from any rooted hostility to a local autonomy for Ireland. He would not yield to the temptation to follow the right hon. Gentleman into the mingled menace and cajolery which pervaded his speech; but even granting that Home Rule in some form were desirable it would not be possible to invent a more mischievous scheme of Home Rule than that proposed by the Bill. He preferred to deal with the problem before the House in the cool light of Constitutional reason. In addresses to his constituents he had stated that, providing the integrity and the unity of the Empire were preserved, he was in favour of granting a large measure of local government to Ireland; but he contended that this Bill did not fulfil the conditions which it was vital in the interests of England and Ireland to uphold. It weakened the supremacy of Parliament and impaired the authority and prerogatives of the Crown, without which the supremacy of Parliament and the Imperial Unity could not be maintained. The wording of the earlier clauses of the Bill obviously granted to the Irish Parliament all the powers which were not specially reserved to the Imperial Parliament. This was a matter which radically affected the relations which ought to exist between a supreme Parliament and a subordinate Legislature. Ireland was treated as if she were a separate Sovereign State which conceded to Great Britain certain of her Sovereign powers for the sake of establishing a Union. This was as anomalous as it would be if the Bank of England in establishing an agency in Liverpool began by investing the agency with all the powers of the parent institution and then reserved certain rights to itself. The Bill ought to have started by asserting the supreme authority of the superior Parliament in all matters determinate and indeterminate, and it ought to have excepted out of that supreme authority whatever powers it might be deemed advisable to grant to the lesser Body. The Bill adopted a peculiar and suspicious way of beginning to establish the relations that were to subsist between Great Britain and Ireland. This was not a question of words, but it was one of fundamental principle. The Bill created a new situation, the design of which had been elaborated in some political workshop, and had been kept as close as if the inventor feared that someone would get hold of his idea before he could obtain a provisional specification. It was the first time a statesman had shut himself up in this way to play the part of a political Edison constructing in a workshop, the avenues to which were guarded, a novel system of Constitutional machinery. The result would not be one to encourage any statesman to repeat the experiment. The Bill proposed a written Constitution, and, therefore, every word and term of it became a matter of vital importance. If a dispute should arise as to the relative jurisdiction of the two Parliaments, the Judicial

Committee would be bound to decide upon the words of the Statute. It would be pointed out by learned counsel that the Act began by conferring unlimited power and Sovereignty upon the Irish Legislature, and then reserving certain large powers to the Imperial Government. The result would be to give the Irish Parliament an immense advantage in any opposition to the authority of the Imperial Parliament. The relations which existed between Great Britain and Canada in Lord Durham's time were not similar to those which now existed between Great Britain and Ireland. Canada was not represented in or taxed by the Imperial Parliament; there was no Legislative Union; there was no reciprocal interchange of political opinions and emotions. But there was a Legislative Union between Upper and Lower Canada, notwithstanding the differences of race, creed, and local interests. Then came a Parliamentary deadlock, and federation was proposed. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick had Legislatures of their own; and there were also Prince Edward's Island and Newfoundland. The project was to dissolve the Legislative Union between Upper and Lower Canada, and, preserving to each a certain measure of autonomy, to federate them under a supreme Government and to allow the other Colonies to come in on the same terms. At the time the Dominion Act was under discussion Sir John Macdonald said the United States had commenced at the wrong end by declaring State Sovereignty and reserving federal powers—the mistake which this Bill proposed to commit—and the Canadian statesmen adopted a different plan, strengthening the general Parliament, giving it all great subjects of legislation, and expressly declaring that all matters of a general character which were not reserved should be conferred on the general Government and Legislature. Thus the Dominion avoided the weakness of the United States and all conflict as to jurisdiction and authority. This showed the importance of reversing the process passed by the present Bill and of maintaining the supreme authority of the Imperial Parliament. Indeed, this was once the view of the Prime Minister himself, as expressed in a speech he made at Dalkeith in 1879. The fatal error ran through the whole Bill. It would seem that the right hon. Gentleman began by acknowledging the independence of Ireland. Matters which in the Dominion were reserved for the Central Authority in virtue of its supremacy were granted to Ireland. In Canada the Criminal Law was reserved to the Central Authority, and the Dominion thus avoided one of the defects of the Constitution of the United States—a defect which this Bill proposed to repeat in the case of Ireland. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James) told the House the other night that the only attempt in the Bill to preserve the supremacy of Parliament was to be found in the 37th clause. He submitted, however, that no one could read that clause with care without coming to the conclusion that it was a blind and that it expressed nothing. No one who sincerely desired the welfare and happiness of these Realms could share the guilt of passing an Act which directly attacked the supremacy of Parliament and the integrity of the United Kingdom. While he was perfectly willing to take part in granting a generous measure of local government to Ireland, he had no hesitation whatever in voting for the rejection of this Bill.

Mr. THOROLD ROGERS (Southwark, Bermondsey) said, that the House had naturally heard during the course of this debate a great deal of biography, a great deal of apology, and a great deal of prophecy from right hon. and hon. Gentlemen who were in the Government or who had held Office. It was true that statements on this subject had not been given to the House very plentifully from the Front Ministerial Bench. They were like the dumb parrot of the story, they thought the more. For himself, after studying the history of the question, he had come to the conclusion that the greatest blunder that Pitt ever made was the Union between Great Britain and Ireland. He had no hesitation in saying that when prophecies were plentiful and right he very much preferred fulfilled to unfulfilled prophecies. Anybody could predict; but when the test of subsequent experience proved that the prediction was entirely fortified by facts, he was bound to say that he attached great weight to the judgments which eminent men in past times had made upon this subject. He did not think that the eloquent speech of the hon. Member for Mayo made out as fully as it should have done the real services which the so-called Grattan Parliament effected, or that the Prime Minister had given it complete credit for its work. In the year 1781 the Irish Parliament began to repeal the atrocious Criminal Law which was enacted against the consciences of our Catholic fellow-countrymen, and he might fairly say that in matters of religious toleration the Irish Parliament was 60 or 70 years ahead of the English Parliament. Then, again, at the time of the French War the Irish Parliament strove to secure for the Irish people all the benefits which the English Parliament endeavoured to secure for the English people. When the war broke out with France fresh supplies of money were granted by the Irish nation in order to assist this country. The Irish Parliament levied indirect taxation extensively on the people, and to such an extent as to almost justify Lord Clare's observation that Ireland was almost in a state of bankruptcy. No doubt, a very terrible revolution broke out in 1798; but the origin of it was known to every student of history. Everyone knew how the movement of the United Irishmen began, how it developed, and how the Irish Parliament, with the assistance of the English Parliament, put down this revolt in circumstances which shocked all those who read the facts. But with regard to the Irish insurrection, the British Parliament gave its formal thanks to the Irish Parliament for its loyalty and its activity. The ostensible reason why the Union was effected was owing to the Constitutional mistake made by the Irish Parliament on the question of the Regency. It should be borne in mind, however, that the Irish Parliament not only received the warm congratulation of Fox and the Whigs, but the gratitude and the thanks of the Prince of Wales. On this question he should like to call the attention of hon. Gentlemen opposite to the words of a statesman who was fast becoming a myth, and who was being converted by his so-called adherents from a sensible statesman into a sentimental and a silly one—

> "Irish policy is Irish history; and I have no faith in any statesman who attempts to remedy the evils of Ireland who is either ignorant of the past, or who will not take lessons from it."

That is a passage from a speech of Mr. Disraeli delivered in 1868, and the observation was as wise as it was instructive. The hon. Member proceeded to show that the propositions of the Government with regard to the Irish Union were rejected in 1799; that the number of placemen, nominees, and owners of pocket boroughs in the Irish Parliament numbered 168—a number sufficient to carry the second reading of the present measure; that every Irishman of note who voted in favour of the Union was turned out of Office, among them being the Grandfather of the hon. Member for Cork; and that £1,400,000 was placed by the English Exchequer on the Irish Public Debt in order to compensate the owners of rotten pocket boroughs. Assuredly it was a time for people who called themselves statesmen to give up wrangling about the details of the measure of satisfaction to Ireland and to affirm its principle, so that the intolerable reproach of the English people might be taken away. Sheridan said that a Union effected by fraud, intrigue, corruption, and intimidation would ultimately endanger the connection between the two countries. Mr. Grey, afterwards Lord Grey, whose opinions, unhappily, were not hereditary in his family, said that the tendency of the measure would be to disunite, that it would create discontent, distrust, jealousy, and suspicion; if they persisted in it resentment would follow; and though they might be able to obtain the seeming consent of the Parliament of Ireland, the people of that country would wait for an opportunity of recovering the rights which had been taken away. Having referred to Mr. Tierney, Mr. Hobhouse, Mr. Pulteney, and others as opponents of the measure, the hon. Gentleman said that he admired the general candour and disinterestedness of the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale; and there was nothing which had fallen from the noble Marquess on this subject to which any taint of self-seeking could be attached. But he might mention that among the opponents of the Union he found the name of the noble Marquess's Grandfather, and there was no name among the Whigs of the time which stood out with greater lustre than that of Lord George Cavendish, the first Lord Burlington, and the Grandfather of the noble Marquess. He admitted the candour and intelligence of the noble Marquess the

Member for Rossendale; but he could not admit that they were greater than the candour and foresight of the noble Marquess's Grandfather. General Fitzpatrick said that he knew nothing in the conduct of the French more atrocious as a breach of faith than would be the conduct of the House if they passed that measure. He would now quote a word or two from a speech of a not very wise man — Mr. Speaker Addington. He spoke in favour of the Union; and the motive which he gave for supporting it was that the large majority of the Irish people were Catholics, and that four-fifths of the property of the country were in the hands of Protestants. But he was not willing to admit that an unjust and usurped right became sanctified by the lapse of 150 or 170 years. Mr. Hobhouse said that the Union scheme would be the destruction of the rights of the Irish people, and that it would meet with the opposition of all parties except such as wished for a separation between the two countries. He thought Mr. Hobhouse had spoken in the spirit of prophecy. Those who read Irish history at the time knew what were the opinions of that man who bore the honoured name of Plunket. The fact was that all lawyers of eminence in Ireland boldly denied the competence of the Irish Parliament to pass the Union. The hon. Member also quoted the opinions expressed by Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord Lansdowne, and other Whig Peers on the subject of the Union between England and Ireland at the time it was proposed, and then went on to remark that it was effected, although 29 counties petitioned against it, 707,000 persons signing the Petitions against it, while only 3,000 persons petitioned for it. The language contained in the protests of the Irish Lords against the Union, he observed, were extremely significant of the popular opinion on the question at the time. The present Government, however, had now determined to do what they could to satisfy the aspirations of the vast majority of the Irish people, and to heal the divisions which had weakened the two countries for so many years. The criticism of this Bill had been approached in many ways. Sometimes they were told it was a disruption of the Union, and sometimes that it was a wonder that Irishmen would accept anything so small and so pitiful. The two statements could not be consistent. He admitted that to cut the new Irish Parliament off, as that Bill would do, from 20 topics of discussion which were among the highest questions which a Parliament could debate, did strike him as something strange and he might say shocking. Many of the subjects from which the Irish were to be excluded were matters that were discussed in that House; for, although some of them might be called "functions of the Crown," they all knew that that was but a decent euphemism for the advice and perhaps the control of Parliament. He could, however, imagine the Irish Members now saying that, after much importunity and after long years of ill-feeling, they hoped they had at last induced an English Parliament to acquiesce in putting upon them the duty of healing the wounds of their distracted country. They had claimed their right in the ear of Europe and amid the sympathies of the civilized world. Every foreign nation had flung its taunt at the English people that they had a disaffected Ireland. The problem before the Irish Parliament would, no doubt, be one of no common difficulty, and its solution would require infinite skill and infinite tact and temper; and they should be glad, therefore, to have the business put before them narrowed instead of enlarged, to have the topics of disagreement few instead of many, and to be left, at least for a long time to come, to devote their entire attention to setting in order the domestic affairs of their own country; but they might say—"If we are the idiots and knaves which some people calmly call us, we shall bring down on ourselves the scorn of those who have proffered us their sympathy. We can afford to disregard alike the sneers of the uninformed and the paltry malice of faction; we are bound to solve the problem put before us, and with God's help we will; but do not put upon unskilled and untrained legislators more than our strength will enable us to bear." He believed that a more scandalous and unfounded calumny could not be uttered than the attempt to predict the action of the future Irish Parliament from the speeches of Irish politicians. Men said things when they were striving to gain a result which were very far from their hearts, perhaps, at all times, but certainly out of their heads when responsibilities were put upon them. If he could judge from the action of the last Irish Parliament between 1782 and 1800, the Irish people would rise to their responsibilities, would interpret their duty honestly, and would refuse to be misled, because hard words were used against them, into doing hard deeds against any of their fellow-countrymen. Objection had been taken to the proposed exclusion of the Irish Members from the English Parliament. For his own part, he confessed he would like to see them there. They had contrived by their importunity to obtain some justice for Irish tenants; and, though he did not wish to see judicial rents established in England, he would like to have the Irish Members to help with their importunity in revising rents in England. He had latterly seen that an eminent statesman —he did not use the word in a complimentary sense, for a statesman was a person who had the privilege of being converted as often as he pleased, while a politician was bound to stand by his opinions—an eminent statesman had said that this Bill would leave the Ulster people divided from Ireland. That opinion was supremely silly and supremely wicked. The hon. Member for Mayo did well to call attention to the fact that the Ulsterman was as proud of the name of Irishman as one who hailed from Connaught or Munster. He had also seen—what he had hoped would never be the utterance of a man calling himself a Liberal, let alone a Radical —he had seen an attempt to revive religious differences, to dig up anew that hideous and hateful corpse which all thought was dead and buried. He did not expect that a person whom he might have looked up to as a leader of men would have condescended in this struggle to have revived what he thought was so long scouted by all men of liberal opinion that it would be only remembered as a hateful memory. He knew the differences between Christianity and some forms of religions—how the first had served to unite people, and was exercising day by day a more vigorous control over the lives and consciences of men, and how the latter had become deservedly obsolete. He did not know what the fate of this measure might be. He was quite certain that the principle contained in this measure was not only vital, but could not be put down. He did not know whether it might fall to the Prime Minister's lot to bring about this healing measure between two historical nations. He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman had incurred the censure which he remembered to have read in a mediæval writer—*Qui æstimat se plus aliis nosse, putat se plus aliis posse.* Whether the right hon. Gentleman had measured his strength in the struggle,. he did not know. It might be that Providence might deny to him the function of completing this great and healing work; but this he was prepared to say—that with this message of justice, of wisdom, of peace, and of true union, the right hon. Gentleman's name would inevitably be identified. His arguments would inevitably be repeated, and though the conversion of the hostility to the measure might be slow, yet it would be sure; and he was convinced that before very long it would be seen as clearly by those who resisted it as by those who adopted and endorsed it that the only solution of the Irish difficulty was to hand over to the Irish people, under proper safeguards — and he was convinced that the safeguards in the measure proposed by the right hon. Gentleman were entirely sufficient—that management of their own affairs which, if given to them in a frank and trustful spirit, would do more to revive their affection for the English people and secure their loyalty to the British Constitution than any Act which coldly repelled their aspirations and tended to put a check on their reasonable demands.

SIR JAMES CORRY (Armagh, Mid) said, that, being so intimately connected as he was with the North of Ireland, he could not content himself with giving a silent vote on this question. His election in Ireland was fought after the appearance of what was known as the unauthorized version of the Prime Minister's views. Not only those whose general political views coincided with his own, but very many Liberals in addition, gave him their support; and as the question of Home Rule was the paramount one at the election he thought he might not unjustly claim to be heard upon the subject. He must say he was much amazed at the way in which the question was regarded by some English and Scotch Members and by their constituencies, because he felt convinced, and he had never disguised his opinion on the subject, that Home Rule meant nothing more nor less than Repeal. He had always endeavoured to bring this view of the question home to the minds of his Liberal friends in the North of Ireland; but they refused to believe that any responsible Government, much less a Government presided over by the right hon. Gentleman the present Prime Minister, in whom they reposed such great confidence, would ever propose a measure for the Repeal of the Union. They had, however, been deceived, and his (Sir James Corry's) co-religionists, the Presbyterians of Ulster, who had zealously supported the right hon. Gentleman in times past, had recently informed him that they were determined to oppose in every possible way such a measure as he had now brought before the House of Commons, because they felt that there would be no security for the Loyal minority in Ireland if they came under the control of a Nationalist Parliament sitting at Dublin. They were now told by hon. Members below the Gangway, on his side of the House, that all this was a mistake and a false alarm, and that they had no desire to deal unfairly to the Loyal minority in the North of Ireland, and that as fellow-countrymen the minority ought to trust them. Well, he preferred to base his judgment upon experience and upon history rather than upon any promises or assurances whatever. Promises had been made and assurances had been given in former times, and had been broken. He was as satisfied as he possibly could be that whatever hon. Members below the Gangway might now say, they would not, in a short time, be in a position to keep their promises, even if they wished to do so, because they would be driven out by a force which they could not resist. The Government had introduced into this Bill some extraordinary provisions, which he should have thought it would have been beyond the wit of man to devise. For instance, the bringing together of two Orders in the same House was an extraordinary provision, and he was certain it was a wholly delusory one and incapable of satisfactory realization, so far as it was intended to afford any protection to the Loyal minority. He had gone into the matter carefully, and he had satisfied himself that the majority of the first Order who would be returned to the House would be of exactly the same class as the Members of the second Order—at least it was perfectly safe to say that more than half of the first Order would be the same class as the second. Therefore, the Northern minority had not much reason to be thankful to the Government for this supposed arrangement for their protection. His hon. Friend the Member for Londonderry (Mr. Lewis) spoke the other night of the material progress which Ireland had made since the Union. He (Sir James Corry) would not repeat what the hon. Member had so well said. Knowing a great deal of the commercial relations and interests of Ireland, he had no hesitation in saying that if this measure were passed it would prove a great blow to the commercial prosperity of that country. Personally, he had been intimately connected with the commerce of Belfast and of the North of Ireland for the last 40 years. He had been always proud to call himself an Irishman, and pleased to have the ships of his firm registered as sailing from the port of Belfast, so that the port might become known all over the world. One reason for his pride in doing this was the connection with Great Britain. But he was bound to say if this Home Rule Bill should pass he would as soon think of commencing a commercial enterprize in the deserts of the Soudan as in any part of Ireland. He had been told that 85 Nationalist Members had been returned from Ireland to the present Parliament; but he should like to ask what any single one of them, or what all of them put together, had ever done to promote the commercial prosperity of Ireland? They had, it was true, been very careful to protect their own interests and keep up the disturbing elements of agitation; but if any one of them had ever done anything to promote the material interests of the country, he (Sir James Corry) had failed to find it out. They had had in Ireland, as in England and other countries, commercial and agricultural depression; but if they had been left alone he believed they would have emerged from the crisis as well as their neighbours. However, he feared that he could now no longer make such a boast, for now every industry was paralyzed by the proposals in this Bill, which had filled the commercial classes with alarm. Anyone looking at the Stock Exchange quotations—the very large fall that had taken place in Irish Stock—and comparing the quotations now with what they were some time ago, could obtain for himself some idea of the injury already done to Ireland by the mere proposal of this measure; and he would leave them to imagine what would be the result of its being passed. They were told now that if this Bill passed, and when an Irish Parliament sat in Dublin, trade, commerce, and industries would spring up to an extraordinary extent, because before the Union prosperity existed in Ireland, and hon. Members below the Gangway pointed to the result of establishing an Irish Parliament in 1782. He had looked carefully into the matter, and he had failed to find any indication of that great prosperity. Well, it was true that for a short time after the establishment of that Parliament there was great prosperity in Ireland, because of the idea which laid hold of the mind of men that everything must of necessity be prosperous; but that state of things soon came to an end. He spoke as one who knew the country intimately, and who had taken a great pride in promoting in every possible way its commercial prosperity, and he said, without fear of contradiction, that the North of Ireland deserved some recompense from the English Government for what she had done in developing industry and commerce in that portion of Ireland. They had certainly made the most of the resources at their command; but they were now told that they must not consider the prosperity of Belfast as any indication at all of the prosperity of the country. All he could say was that the only part of Ireland where commercial enterprize had been extended as it had been was at Belfast; and he was satisfied, if they had been let alone, and the country had not been disturbed by agitation for Home Rule, and other agitations of that kind had not been so prevalent for the last 86 years, the country altogether, and especially the North of Ireland, would have been much more prosperous than at the present time. He remembered on one occasion some years ago, after a division in the House, saying to Mr. Butt—"No man knows better than you that this craze of yours is all moonshine." And Mr. Butt replied—"I admit that if all Ireland were as prosperous as you are in the North of Ireland, the demand for Home Rule would have no significance whatever." That was the ground which he (Sir James Corry) took up. No doubt existed in his mind that, if this measure were carried to a successful issue, as he was satisfied it would not be, it would be ruinous to the best interests of Ireland. He was by no means an exponent of extreme opinions, nor had he ever seen his way to join the Orange Society, and many of his Friends told him he was weak-kneed upon such subjects; but he felt that he had the best interests of the country at heart, and he was surprised, therefore, to hear the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld) state that there was no patriotism in the breasts of the Protestant minority in the North of Ireland, or they would not oppose such a measure as this for the benefit of their country. All he could say, knowing his fellow-countrymen in the North, was that if patriotism was extinct in their breasts he knew not where to find it. The hon. Member for West Clare (Mr. Jordan) had presented himself to the House as an Ulster Protestant Nationalist; but he would venture to say that for every Ulster Protestant Nationalist that could be found there were at least 10 Roman Catholics adverse to Home Rule. Over and over again in that House they had been told that they were aliens, and had no right to call themselves Irishmen; and he was afraid that if an Irish Government were set up in Dublin the people of the North would be looked upon as aliens, and would be likely to have a rough time of it. Still, that, he was happy to think, was not likely to be the case, for the men of Ulster were pretty strong-headed, and, in any case, if the worst came to the worst, they knew pretty well in Ulster how to take care of themselves. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen), in the course of a speech he had delivered on this question, referred to the remarks made in a Nationalist newspaper published in Belfast in reference to the linen trade. At the time the article was published he (Sir James Corry) had his attention called to it, and he said then, what he would repeat now, that he was perfectly satisfied that that was the encouragement they might expect for their manufactures and industries in Ulster if a Nationalist Parliament were established. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) said he did not look upon the religious question as of any importance whatever. Well, he (Sir James Corry) looked upon the religious question with a great deal of concern indeed; and he felt satisfied that there would be a very serious state of affairs, indeed, if such a measure as this passed, and if the Nationalist Party got the upper hand in Ireland. The hon. Member for Mayo (Mr. Dillon), who spoke the other night, and for whose honesty of purpose and straightforwardness he (Sir James Corry) had always entertained the highest admiration, had told them not to believe that the Irish Nationalists would be so foolish as to interfere with Irish industry. But he (Sir James Corry), speaking as a commercial man, did not agree with the hon. Member; but, anyhow, he preferred to be let alone; they had a good position now from their connection with England, and he could say with perfect confidence that all the Members of the Liberal Party in Ulster were just as much opposed to the passage of the Bill as those calling themselves Conservatives or Tories. Then, there was the financial aspect of the question, with which he would not detain the House. But he had seen enough in the newspapers with regard to it which entitled him to say that if it were brought into practice it would not hold water. He would leave the financial aspect of the question to some more competent person to deal with. A great deal had been said the other night about the extinction of the cotton industry in Ireland. In explanation of this, he might say that about the time when the power loom superseded hand spinning it was found more profitable to spin flax than cotton in the North of Ireland, and for that reason it had taken root there, while the cotton industry had died out. As a Member of the Commission on the Depression of Trade he had heard evidence adduced which showed that special manufactures took hold of a place, and that sometimes, owing to local conditions, a change occurred and one industry superseded others. He might instance shipbuilding on the Thames, which had almost disappeared and gone to other places, and he was glad to know that Belfast had got a share of it. He remembered very well the time shipbuilding began at Belfast—at the same time the industry was started at Dublin. At Belfast it succeeded, but at Dublin it decayed. He would not now state what were the reasons which he thought accounted for the difference of success in the two ports; but if he were a witness and under cross-examination, he considered that he could give very good reasons for the falling off in the shipbuilding trade at Dublin. As a member of the Protestant and Loyal minority of Ulster—as he was happy to say they were called—he was glad to state he was against this measure of Home Rule. He knew that all Protestants in the North of Ireland, without exception, were against the Bill. So far as local government was concerned, he was perfectly willing to grant the same measure to Ireland as he would to England and Scotland, but no more and no less, because he believed that anything else would prove disastrous to the country. They had been told that if Home Rule were not granted, they might look out for something very bad in Ireland. Well, the Loyal minority were prepared for that, and he had no fear that some way would be found to meet and overwhelm those who indulged in those threats. They paid as much attention to such threats as they deserved; and, no matter what might happen, he should feel it his duty to do all that in him lay to have the measure rejected.

Mr. HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.) said, he rose with great regret to say a few words, because he felt compelled to record his vote against this Bill. He and his Friends were returned at the last Election on what they believed to be the authorized Liberal programme put before the country by the Prime Minister, and they looked forward with much pleasure to supporting him as loyally in that House as they did during the elections. But, unfortunately, they had been forced into a temporary opposition by what he must call the political *coup d'état* of the last two or three months. He wished to point out that sympathy with the extension of local self-government through all parts of the United Kingdom was perfectly consistent with determined hostility to this Bill. Local self-government and autonomy were vague and misleading terms if they were not defined; and he could not vote for the second reading of this Bill merely as affirming such principles in the abstract. They had been warned by the Prime Minister not to hesitate about the adoption of the principle of representative institutions. Liberals like himself had fully adopted that principle; but they could not agree to its application to Ireland in the mode proposed by the present Bill. They were willing to govern Ireland to some extent according to Irish ideas; but they were not willing to give up the whole government of Ireland to the majority of the Irish people. He believed that this Imperial Parliament had full power and also the will to do justice to the people of Ireland if Irishmen would come there and say frankly what they desired; but he would not give to the Nationalist majority control over the lives, liberties, and property of all the Queen's subjects in Ireland. The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman), speaking at Edinburgh, had described the cardinal principle of the Bill as being—

> "The creation of a Central Body in Dublin, which should have legislative as well as administrative powers, and which should appoint the Irish Executive, which should be responsible to it."

There was the greatest difference between affirming such a principle as that and extending to Ireland any form of what had hitherto been known as local government—as developed, for instance, in the great municipalities of England and Scotland. The Bill, to his mind, was more akin to dismemberment than to local self-government. There were two Liberal policies before the country now. There was the plan of the Government, which, as they were told, was to follow "the strictly analogous precedent" of Canada, and to transform Ireland into a sort of self-governing Colony. And there was, on the other hand, the plan laid down at Belfast, and reaffirmed since by the noble Lord the Member for the Rossendale Division of Lancashire (the Marquess of Hartington), for the gradual extension of local government to Ireland, so as to lay a firm foundation for the future reconstruction of the Irish Government. The Prime Minister had told the House that social order in Ireland was undermined, and yet he was proposing to erect on this quaking bog of social discontent the elaborate superstructure of a brand-new Constitution. The noble Lord preferred, like a prudent architect, first to make sure of his foundations, and then to build gradually but surely up to the coping-stone. Could there be a doubt that those Liberals who really believed in the advantages of local self-government, and wished to secure its permanence and stability, ought to prefer the plan of the noble Lord—the house founded upon the rock, rather than that founded upon the sand? They were told, however, that there was a fatal objection to the gradual reconstruction of the Irish Government—namely, that it would fail to conciliate the national sentiment of hon. Members from Ireland. It was urged that we ought to effect this grand reconciliation between the English and the Irish peoples by recognizing once for all the separate nationality of Ireland. That was the real principle which they were asked to affirm in voting for the second reading of this Bill. It was said that the Irish people were a separate and a misgoverned nation, and must have a Parliament of their own because they could not get justice from the Imperial Parliament. That principle, if admitted, would carry us far beyond the lines of the present Bill. If Ireland were to be recognized once for all as a separate nation, we could not limit her action by the restrictions which the Bill would impose. In that case, the Irish nation must have the absolute control of its national affairs. What nation was there worthy of the name which had not power to give State aid to the religion of the majority, or to establish a system of denominational education, or which submitted to pay a tribute of more than half its Revenues to another nation? If Irish national sentiment was not to prevail, then this Bill went too far; but if it was to prevail, then this Bill did not go far enough, and could not be a final settlement. There was no difficulty in meeting this demand for a separate nationality from a Liberal point of view. Why should the Liberals, who had striven for 20 years past to remove the just grievances of Ireland, admit that the Irish were an oppressed and a misgoverned nationality? Why should they not continue to act as they had acted before, and to concede all claims for justice, while refusing to go further, and to concede all that the Representatives of Ireland chose to ask, whether those demands were, in the opinion of English Members, just or unjust? He would remind the House of what the Prime Minister said at Aberdeen in 1871, when speaking of Ireland, that there was a higher law to govern the actions of Parliaments and politicians than the law of conciliation, good as that law might be. The higher and paramount law was the law of justice, and that law ought to guide them now. Let them do full justice to Irish demands; but let them not, yielding to a mistaken sense of generosity, loose the bonds of the United Kingdom, and take a first, but, as he feared, an irrevocable step towards the separation of Ireland and Great Britain.

Mr. YEO (Glamorgan, Gower) said, he was glad to say that no part of the United Kingdom had spoken more emphatically or with a greater degree of unanimity in favour of the measure of the Prime Minister than the constituencies of Wales. The people of Wales had a growing conviction that if they were to cure the ill-feeling which had so long existed in Ireland and replace it by real unity between Ireland and this country it could only be done by some large and wise concession, and that recourse to coercion was utterly hopeless. Even in those Welsh constituencies where the Members themselves were opposed to the Bill there had been no equivocal voice, but a clear and an unmistakable expression of utter dissatisfaction at the attitude which those Members had assumed. Without hesitation he asserted that Wales was in sympathy with Ireland on this question, and that the confidence of Wales in the Prime Minister had only been intensified by the desertions of his former followers. For his own part, he looked favourably upon the main provisions of this Bill. He believed Home Rule to be a good thing in itself, and he regarded the Bill not only as an act of justice to Ireland, but as a promise of Home Rule for Wales, for Scotland, and the rest of the United Kingdom. The House of Commons was now overweighted by its duties, and some great measure of decentralization was necessary to allow it to carry out those duties. Another reason for which he approved of Home Rule was that it was, in his opinion, the only road to the goal which he himself and many other Members of that House desired to see reached—namely, Imperial federation. Each country was better able to manage its own affairs than was the Imperial Parliament to manage them for it. They were told that gratitude did not exist in the Irish character, that the Irish were unfit for self-government; but he was not willing to accept the statement that Ireland was the only one country in Europe where the Catholic and the Protestant populations could not be trusted to live peaceably together. But looking forward to Home Rule for Wales and Scotland, he desired from his heart that they should retain the Irish Members in the Imperial Parliament, because he knew that the people of Wales would never accept the degradation of exclusion from taking their part in the Imperial Government; and he could not believe that the Irish Members, whatever their present ideas might be, would long be content to occupy what he could not but regard as a somewhat degraded position. He could not, and would not, believe that the Irish Members would voluntarily declare that they desired to be excluded from the consideration of Imperial affairs; if it were so, he would look upon it as an evil sign that they had a concealed desire for separation. The difficulty had been mentioned of defining what were Imperial affairs. In his opinion, the definition of the subjects excluded from the cognizance of the Irish Parliament would be a definition of the subjects which the Irish Members should consider in that House. With regard to the desire which might exist of excluding the Irish Members from taking part in their discussions on account of obstruction, he thought that Rules of Procedure might easily be framed by which any obstruction might be prevented. The difficulty of a fluctuating majority had been spoken of as a serious objection to the scheme. He admitted the reality of the objection; but what he desired to see, and what he believed would follow from the measure now under discussion, if passed, was that a British statutory subordinate Parliament, consisting of English, Scottish, and Welsh Members, should be created to consider domestic affairs, and from the consideration of which the same affairs should be withdrawn as were withdrawn from that of the Irish Parliament. It would not necessarily follow that the Prime Minister in the one Parliament would be Prime Minister in the other, although in all probability a powerful statesman would become Minister in both. That would be a great step in the direction of federation, and might lead to negotiations with the Colonies and a further development of the principle. In conclusion, he would say that, while he should be glad to retain the Irish Members at Westminster, he had no sympathy with those who were attempting to extort from the Prime Minister any further declaration on the subject. By his vote he desired only to assert the principle of Home Rule, and to reserve for himself absolute freedom of action with regard to the ulterior question of the retention or exclusion of the Irish Members from that House.

COLONEL E. HUGHES (Woolwich): As one of the new Members, I desire to make a few observations on this important question of Home Rule. I believe the Irish living in England do not desire separation; but many of the Irish living in Ireland, except Ulster, have been taught by agitators to believe in separation. At the last Election, after the Irish voters in my constituency of Woolwich—some 220—had promised me their votes, the order came down from the Irish Nationalists that I was to be supported. A notice was posted outside the Catholic church to that effect. I at once held a meeting of the Irish voters, and the question of separation was proposed as an amendment to my promise of equal laws; the separation was only supported by two votes. I am, therefore, as the Representative of our Irish fellow-countrymen in my constituency, pledged to vote for the Union of the two countries. But what has happened lately? Why, the hon. Members for North Leitrim and North Mayo, on the 31st of March last, held a meeting at Woolwich, and the Chairman, a Mr. Bell, opened by saying that—

> "The Irish meant never to cease agitating until they were a seperate nation."

The hon. Member for North Leitrim (Mr. Conway) did not object to this opening speech; but proceeded to say that one Irish Member was worth two Tories, and the "Irish chaps" could turn the balance of Parties just as it might answer their interests best. The hon. Member for North Mayo (Mr. Crilly) did not object to the opening speech either; but, on the contrary, is reported to have said—

> "They would not cease to agitate till Ireland was a free nation."

In April there was a meeting in Greenwich, when the Rev. Father Ryan said—

> "They might depend that the time of Ireland's freedom had come, when a British Prime Minister brought in a Bill for the Repeal of the Union."

This is the opinion of one of the constituents of the former Member for Greenwich—the Prime Minister. The hon. Members for Mid Tipperary (Mr. Mayne) and South Donegal (Mr. Kelly) attended this meeting at Greenwich, and did not object to this statement in their presence. These four Members at the two meetings I have referred to went as delegates from the Irish National League only a few weeks ago, and I am bound to come to the conclusion that they do approve and desire the Repeal of the Union. This policy of separation has been tried elsewhere, notably in the case of Italy and Sicily, and has resulted in the two being one country. At one time it was proposed that Sicily and Naples should be incorporated in one common Parliament. Sicilians would not consent. Lord Palmerston advocated the incorporation as being most suitable to the actual state of Europe. He said—

> "Sicily, although a fine Island, full of natural resources and inhabited by a highly-gifted people, is nevertheless not large enough to be, in the present state of the world, a really independent country; and were it entirely separated from Naples, it would soon run the risk of becoming an object of contest for foreign influence, and of sinking at last into the condition of satellite to some of the more powerful States of Europe."

These words seem to be singularly appropriate to the present case; you have only to substitute Ireland for Sicily, and you have an opinion to which we would all pay great deference. The great evil I notice in this controversy is that plain words are not used. The proposal before the House is called "a modification of the Union," and not separation. Might I ask the hon. and learned Attorney General whether he would introduce this misuse of terms into legal procedure? For instance, after a decree for judicial separation, the fiscal unity is preserved by the payment of alimony, nor can any alliances be formed by the separated parties; will he in future call this a petition for "the modification of the Union," and not, as now, for judicial separation? The plan before us is said to be without a rival; well, so far as it tends to a repeal of the Union, I hope it may always remain so. The argument in its favour by its proposer seems to be that he has tried everything—cordials and astringents—and still the patient does not recover. I say the obvious inference is, change the doctor; and in support of this view I fearlessly state that when Conservatives have been in Office the population of Ireland has increased, and when Liberals have been in Office the population has diminished. A diagnosis of the disease shows first poverty, then naturally discontent, afterwards foreign paid agitation, and, finally, revolution—the cause is poverty. Industrial employment for the people is the first element of national contentment. I would sooner spend £50,000,000 in providing employment than in merely changing landlords; and those supporters of this Bill who have started factories abroad, to get the advantage of cheap labour and compete with their own countrymen, would have done better as politicians had they spent that money in Ireland. The remedy proposed will have the effect not only of preventing capital being invested in Ireland, but that which is there now will be withdrawn on the first opportunity, and so the poverty will increase. Shifting the responsibility for the future on to the Irish Parliament, or, in other words, on to the Irish National League, will not lessen poverty, for that League cannot support itself without voluntary and involuntary contributions. If the members of the League had proposed legislation themselves, if they had asked for equal laws and been refused by this Parliament, then they would have some case against us. I am ready, as I have said, to vote for equal laws; and I believe those can be better framed with the assistance of the experienced Members of this House than by a new House composed of those Members only who have had but little experience in constructive legislation. Why should not Irishmen in Ireland be as happy as Irishmen in England? If the laws were the same it could only be a question of "industrial employment." I am glad to believe that the solution of this question rests with the independent Members of this House. I know that an independent Member is described as one not to be depended upon; that is so in the sense that we will not follow blindly the lead of anyone, but will exercise our own judgment. What else are we sent here for? I understood the hon. and junior Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) to say, the other day, that he would follow the Prime Minister as far as he could see, and further, if he thought the Prime Minister could see. That is to say, when it had become dark to him he would still follow. This is not independence; it is blind adulation. The Conservatives might have been in Office now if they had not offended the Irish Party by an early declaration that they meant to have the law obeyed. We did not ally ourselves with the Irish Party. The prophecy of the late Attorney General, the right hon. and learned Member for Bury (Sir Henry James), did not come true. This is what the right hon. and learned Member said at Leicester during the Election—

> "The Tories were allying themselves with those whose open and avowed object was the dismemberment of the country. The Tory Party were now brought to the humiliation of retaining their position by an alliance with those whom a few months ago they were denouncing as rebels; they had a temporary triumph; but a day of reckoning would assuredly come. The judgment that ever was passed upon political crime would surely be recorded, and the sentence that followed that judgment would have to be borne before long. If they saw the Conservative Party in power they could only be in Office by hope of the numerical strength of the Irish Party. Mr. Parnell would demand his price. If the Leaders of the Conservative Party were willing to pay the price of his support there would be men in the ranks of the Conservative Party who would rebel against further degradation and humiliation; public opinion would express itself against it."

These observations intended for the Conservative Party now exactly fit the Liberal Party; and I am very glad to know that the secessions foretold will be found as much on one side of the House as the other, when any proposal is made that is dangerous to the Empire. This most unnatural coalition that now exists between the Prime Minister and the Irish Party must be met by the coalition of Liberal Constitutionalists with Conservatives. If they had come over earlier and helped us the present difficulty might have been avoided; but better late than never. It is not a time to care which noble Marquess is Prime Minister, so that we get the Parliamentary coach out of the rut and put the driving into firmer hands. A great deal has been said about the eternal principles of truth and justice. I always understood that one of those principles was to do unto others as he would wish to be done unto. Is it right, therefore, because we do not want to sit with Irish Members in this House, to ask the Ulster Members to do so in a separate Parliament? Is it right, when we dissolve a partnership to get rid of a bad partner, that we should compel one of our good partners—Ulster—to join the expelled one in the new business? And to enforce this new interpretation of right and justice to make war upon Ulster to compel them to leave us and join the new firm—would such a war be coercion or not? Would such a war be popular? I ask the apostles of truth and justice on what principles they refuse to acknowledge the vested interest of Ulster in the partnership of the United Kingdom, and deny them any future part in the goodwill of a business which they have assisted to create? I speak to commercial men—was ever such a monstrous proposal heard of in the name of justice? When the Transvaal was declared British territory, our traders followed the flag, and in the disgraceful abandonment that afterwards ensued they lost thousands of pounds by trusting to the words of British statesmen—the vindication of the Queen's authority was interpreted to mean a relinquishment of that authority. So in Ulster, capital has been invested on the faith of the Union. Who is to assess the loss that must arise if this Bill passes? Nay, by the mere introduction of this Bill losses are already incurred and capital is shifting. When this nation begins to forget its commercial responsibilities, we may expect to end by repudiating the National Debt. The Earl of Dalhousie, at Liverpool, in supporting a separate Parliament, said—

> "We must not begin by cutting off the richest and most orderly Province from the rest of the country."

If it be bad for the poor and disorderly part of Ireland to lose so good a neighbour as Ulster, it must be still worse to lose so good a neighbour as England. Noble Lords and hon. Members do not follow their own arguments to their inevitable conclusions. The steadying influence of Ulster is not equal to the steadying influence of Ulster and Great Britain combined; and yet I am called upon to abandon my common sense, and believe in truth and justice as expounded by the present Prime Minister. As long ago as 1797, Edmund Burke wrote these words, which are as true now as when they were written. He said—

> "The closest connection between Great Britain and Ireland is essential to the well being—I had almost said to the very being—of the two Kingdoms. I think, indeed, that Great Britain would be ruined by the separation of Ireland; but as there are degrees of ruin it would fall most heavily upon Ireland. By such a separation Ireland would be the most completely undone country in the world; the most wretched, the most distracted, and, in the end, the most desolate part of the habitable globe. Little do many people in Ireland consider how much of its prosperity has been owing to, and still depends upon, its intimate connection with this Kingdom."

The Prime Minister, in introducing the Bill, spoke of foreign garb, and that there was necessarily some antipathy between the Irish and English; but in the Manifesto he said—" Deal with the matter as a matter between brothers." I do not understand being foreigners and brothers; if the latter, why not under the same laws and in the same House? I can quite understand a certain class in this country, on financial grounds, objecting to these Bills, because it is that class which would have to bear any loss that might arise, and they are justified in their opposition. The guarantees for securing the due payment of the subsidy to England seem to me to imply distrust—in short, we cannot trust our money to the new Irish Parliament; but it is proposed to trust it with that which is far more precious—namely, the liberties, property, and even lives of every man, woman, and child in Ireland. With regard to the new Land Bill, how many have we had, all of which were passed on a promise of finality? First, the Land Act, which was to be final; then, in two years, the Land Purchase Act, which was to be more final; and now another Land Bill, which is to be most final. Some of the present landowners are resident and others non-resident, the latter portion are condemned as absentees, and yet it is proposed to buy them all out, and make one large absentee landlord, who in a foreign garb will collect his rent or interest—the step from a "No Rent" Manifesto to a "No Interest" Manifesto is easy. I would rather expend the £50,000,000 in planting manufacturing industries among the Irish; for variety of employments has the advantage that depression in one trade may be alleviated by prosperity in another; but the great point, and the first point, so often insisted upon, is the restoration of law and order, which will never be effectually done until the Irish Question ceases to be the battle ground of political Parties, and the best men on both sides combine to rule—this is now the immediate question before us. I care not for details any more than the Prime Minister, whether the future measure shall be extension of local government only, or a larger scheme for federation, which appeals to our imagination. The sentiment of the Kingdom, which is self-preservation, will not permit this retrograde step of disintegration; and if there be any doubt about it the constituencies must be consulted, and the folly be first sanctioned by those who will have to suffer for it. The people of the United Kingdom are justly proud of our Imperial position; we can govern scattered all over the world 305,000,000. Are we to confess "except in Ireland?" No! Let us all face the difficulty with resolution. It is only cowards who resort to political suicide. I have viewed that beautiful statue erected to Germania on the Niederwald. I rejoice in the unity of Italy, the result of a patriotic desire; and I cannot and will not believe that this British House of Commons will prove false to its traditions, or fail to uphold the dignity and integrity of the Empire.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): Sir, there is one point, at any rate, in which I can join with the hon. Member who has just sat down, and that is in the desire he has expressed that the constituencies should be consulted upon this subject. I can assure him there will be no unwillingness on the part of Her Majesty's Government to take the opinion of the constituencies. Before I address myself to the Constitutional questions which were brought before the House on Thursday night, I desire to say one word upon the speech which fell from the hon. Member for the Gower Division of Glamorganshire (Mr. Yeo), in which he avowed his intention of voting for the second reading of the Bill on the ground that he looked upon the creation of a separate Legislature for Ireland as the cardinal principle of the Bill, and intimated also that he would not consider himself bound by that vote as to the arrangements he might support in Committee with regard to the functions to be discharged here by the Irish Members after the passing of the Bill. I recommend that practical and sensible view to the consideration of the House. That is what we consider to be the principle of the Bill. It is a Bill for establishing a Legislature in and for Ireland, and the question as to the amount of participation in Imperial concerns, which the Irish Members should subsequently take, is a question of detail. It is very largely a question of what I may call machinery, which the House cannot profitably discuss at the present stage. And now I will venture to say a few words upon those Constitutional aspects of this matter which were brought before it on Thursday by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James) in a speech which, I think, was marked by all that refinement of sentiment and fairness of view which so eminently characterize the words of my right hon. and learned Friend. He discussed the question with great minuteness, but not with more minuteness than its importance demands. I hope the House will pardon me if I am obliged, in following my right hon. and learned Friend, to enter into a somewhat technical argument, for the House will unquestionably feel that this Constitutional question is a very important one. Nothing can be more important than that in passing a measure like this we should base it on firm legal grounds, and that we should clearly understand what relation the law we are asked to pass is to bear to the political action that is to go on under it. I do not think anything better deserves the attention of the House, and I hope the House will suffer me to deal somewhat minutely with it. My right hon. and learned Friend laid down three propositions. The first was that by this Bill the unity of the Empire would be destroyed; the second, that the Imperial Parliament would not be able, henceforth, to legislate for Ireland; and the third, that the Sovereignty of the Imperial Parliament would disappear. My right hon. and learned Friend said that the unity of the Empire was created by the union of Parliament. What, was there no unity of the British Empire before 1800? Were we not one Empire during that century of glory which ended in 1800, when the foundations of our Indian and Colonial Dominion were laid, when so many wars were waged by British soldiers and sailors? Or how can it be said that there will be less unity of the Empire under the Bill than there was between 1782 and 1800, when there were two Crowns, two Armies, and two Mutiny Acts? [Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): Two Crowns?] Yes; two Crowns, I say. The Parliament of Ireland claimed the right of disposing of the Regency in a way different from the Parliament of England; and, therefore, even as regards that vital matter of the Crown, there was not the same unity between 1782 and 1800 as will exist under this Bill. My right hon. and learned Friend said the union of the Crown in the same person did not make a United Kingdom, and he cited the case of Hanover; but he forgot that when our Sovereigns were Electors of Hanover they were Members of the Holy Roman Empire, and after that Empire had vanished, became, in 1815, Members of the Germanic Confederation. When he says that that which makes unity of laws is the unity of the law-making power, does he remember that in a country which has long been united, and which in every decade of its existence tends to become more and more united—I mean the United States of North America — there are 38 separate Legislatures which enjoy within their proper sphere supreme legislative power? These Legislatures are entirely uncontrolled by the Federal Congress on certain subjects — subjects of wide compass and great consequence. Not only in the different States are the laws different, but the spirit in which these State laws are administered is different. The noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) said, on the first night of the debate, that he looked upon it as a most important thing that an Englishman should find himself at home if he travelled to Ireland; but that he could not do that if the laws of Ireland were to be not only different in themselves, but also administered by a different Executive, and in a different spirit. This is exactly what happens in the United States. If a citizen travels from Massachusetts or Pennsylvania to Arkansas or Texas, he will find that the laws are different; that the Executive authority is different and independent; and that the laws are administered in a very different and sometimes unfortunate manner; but that does not prevent citizens of the United States who travel out of one State into another from feeling themselves everywhere at home. The second argument of my right hon. and learned Friend was that under the Bill the Imperial Parliament would not be able to legislate for Ireland. He cannot mean that it will not be able to do so for Imperial purposes, because that power is expressly reserved by the Bill. But, he says, can it legislate for other purposes? He says—"Perhaps it can, as a matter of abstract right." But what difference is there between an abstract right and any other kind of right? None whatever. There, indeed, is a difference between two kinds of rights—rights which you put in constant exercise, and rights which you suffer to lie dormant. We have the right in this Parliament to legislate for Ireland, and we shall continue to have it when the Bill becomes an Act. We shall retain, as a matter of pure right, the power to legislate for Ireland for all purposes whatever, for the simple reason that we cannot divest ourselves of it. There is no principle more universally admitted by Constitutional jurists than the absolute omnipotence of Parliament. This omnipotence exists because there is nothing beyond Parliament or behind Parliament. We are sitting here as the nation, the whole nation; we are not delegates entrusted, like the American Congress, with specified and limited powers; we represent the whole British nation, which has committed to us the plenitude of its authority, and has provided no method of national action except through our votes. And we have, therefore, full power to legislate for every purpose. We are not checked or restrained, as is the Congress of the United States, or any other Body existing under a written Constitution, because the whole force and power reside in us to be exercised within these walls. The Irish Members, I am sure, know perfectly that this is so. It is not a question of their asking us whether we will agree to divest ourselves of this power, because we cannot do so. There is one limitation, and one only, upon our omnipotence, and that is that we cannot bind our successors. If we pass a Statute purporting to extinguish our right to legislate on any given subject, or over any given district, it may be repudiated and repealed by any following Parliament—aye, even by this present Parliament on any later day. What then, I may be asked, is the position in which we are to be placed after the concessions proposed in this Bill? It will be this. While the ultimate right to legislate will reside in, and for all English, Scottish, and Imperial purposes will be exercised by, the Imperial Parliament, we shall have conceded to the Irish Legislature the right to legislate on subjects upon which we do not intend to exercise the right of legislating ourselves. This is exactly what we have done with our Colonies. We have yielded to them self-governing powers; the Colonies exercise those powers; and we rarely interfere with the exercise of those powers by them. But it has been pointed out that in the Colonial Acts we had expressly reserved all legislative power to the Imperial Parliament. If my right hon. and learned Friend were here, I could show him that the reservation he seemed to refer to in the Act of 1865 had a purpose and meaning different from that which he imagines. In the Act of 1867, which created the Dominion Legislature of Canada, there is no express reservation of the legislative power of the Imperial Parliament, yet since then the Imperial Parliament has legislated for Canada by passing Merchant Shipping Acts, a Copyright Act, and other measures which are now in force in the Dominion. This, I think, disposes of the second objection of my right hon. and learned Friend. His question was—"Does the Imperial Parliament retain its power of legislating?" I say, as a matter of strict law, it does, but subject to the moral obligation of not exercising its right save in case of necessity. My right hon. and learned Friend did me the honour to refer to an expression I had once used in speaking elsewhere of our Constitution, when I said it was flexible, and not, like the Constitution of the United States, rigid; and he asks—"Will you destroy the flexibility of our Constitution?" I answer, "No; it will remain flexible as before." But I may be asked—"What is the effect of Clause 39? That clause says this Act shall be altered only with the presence of Irish Members; if it does not preclude Parliament from dealing in their absence with certain subjects, what is the use of putting it in the Bill?" It was stated by my right hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld) that this clause is in the nature of a Parliamentary compact; and I venture to use that term in order to explain a little more fully what I believe was in the mind of my right hon. Friend. We mean by a Parliamentary contract an engagement made by a Statute which, although it cannot legally bind a succeeding Parliament, or even the existing Parliament, nevertheless has the effect of imposing a moral obligation upon Parliament not to act contrary to this Statute. Such engagements are constantly made by Parliament. When powers are granted to Railway Companies and Municipalities, a species of Parliamentary contract is entered into with them; and those who lend money to the Municipality, or take shares in the Company, do so on the faith of the engagement made by the Act which constitutes the Body. This is exactly what will be done under Clause 39. Under that clause we shall have given an undertaking that when we wish to alter this Act, or in any way to vary the position which the Irish Legislature and Ireland will hold towards us under it, we will summon back the Irish Members in order to take counsel together upon the subject. Even if that clause did not stand in the Bill, we should be bound in honour and good faith to do something of the kind; and all the clause does is to put, in a clear and definite form, what the obligation will be. This contract, like most contracts, is a two-sided engagement. On our side it binds us not to repeal this

Statute, or to alter it, or to do anything inconsistent with it, so as to prejudice the position of Ireland without summoning the Irish Members; and, on the other hand, it binds the Irish Parliament, on its part, to observe in good faith the Statute in spirit as well as in letter, to act fairly under it, not to abuse or pervert the powers which it gives. While Ireland, through her Parliament, observes this contract, we shall be bound to observe our part of it; and so long as Ireland is faithful to the intentions of the Act in that way, so long will it be our duty, if we desire to modify the Act, to summon the Irish Members here. But if the Irish Parliament should violate the spirit and meaning of the Act, we, on our side, shall be released from our obligation; and then that which is in any case a legal right on our side would become also a moral right, because a breach of the contract on their side would entitle us to use our full legal rights. Now, the imposition of such a moral obligation as this is not a change which will alter the general character of the Constitution. It will leave the sovereignty of Parliament and the consequent flexibility of the Constitution as they were before, since means are provided whereby we can repeal the Act and regain any freedom which it may be supposed we are now morally, though not legally, parting with. Coming now to what my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James) has said about the functions of the Courts under this Bill, I desire to call attention to the matter, because I am afraid that hon. Members may be misled by the reference which he has made to the position of the Privy Council as compared with that of the Supreme Court of the United States. Now, in the United States Congress cannot deal with the decisions of the Supreme Court, because those decisions are delivered as interpretations of the written Constitution, the instrument which creates Congress, and which is the supreme law of the land everywhere. The Supreme Court is out of the reach of Congress, not because it is a Law Court, but because it is the authorized interpreter, or, as one may say, the living voice of a document superior in authority to the will of Congress. But in this country Parliament is above the Privy Council, because we have no written Constitution, and all the Courts are bound to obey the will of Parliament. Therefore, we shall not tie our hands, as the hands of Congress are tied. Under this Act Parliament will still be above the House of Lords, above the Privy Council, above all the Courts of Law anywhere within the Queen's Dominions. No conflict can therefore arise between the decisions of the English and the Irish Judges. There can be no conflict, because the Bill provides that in every case there shall be an appeal to a final Court of Appeal, and the decision of that Court will govern the action of every subordinate Court, whether Irish or English. In cases where the construction of this Act is in question the appeal lies to the Privy Council; in ordinary cases it lies to the House of Lords; but in any case it will be final; therefore there can by no possibility be two sets of Courts continuing to give contradictory decisions. I admit that the system under this Bill is complicated. It cannot be otherwise, for the complication is in the facts with which we have to deal; but consider how complicated the British Constitution itself is. We have superadded to the complications of our Constitutional Common Law and Constitutional Statutes a number of understandings and conventions which are so various and so vague and so delicate that an intelligent stranger reading and studying them in our law books would pronounce the whole system incapable of working. Sir W. Anson, in his recently-published excellent treatise on the English Constitution, says—

> "If our Constitution were stripped bare of convention and displayed in its legal nakedness, it would be found not only unrecognizable, but unworkable."

That is perfectly true, and the Constitution becomes workable only by those conventions and understandings which are superadded to its letter. We are not the only country which is in the position of having to conduct its government by intricate devices. In one way or other this problem of reconciling unity of government with local autonomy and national diversities has confronted nearly all the States of modern Europe. Some countries have tried and have succeeded, as in the case of Austria-Hungary and the new Germanic Empire. I do not deny that difficulties are found in working the dual system in the

Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. But how infinitely better is the political condition of all its parts; how much more stable its fabric than in the days before 1867, when the rights of Hungary were ignored and the semblance of unity maintained by the disciples of Metternich. The relations of the Imperial Germanic Legislature to the large States which form part of that Empire, and which, I believe, has not been referred to in these debates, well deserve study. Bavaria is a State with a population about equal to that of Ireland, and it is a State in many respects, not only as regards religion, but in the character and habits of its people, very unlike the great North German State whose influence is paramount in the Germanic Body. Yet it has been found possible, since 1870, for Bavaria to work harmoniously with Prussia. I will give another instance, which is rather a curious one. It is an instance on a small scale, because the population of the Island is small; but it relates to a country which ought to be interesting to us, not only from the ties of blood which unite us to its people, but from the splendour, unrivalled in the modern world, of its early literature—I mean the case of Iceland. [*Cries of* "Oh!" *from the Opposition.*] Hon. Members opposite seem curiously anxious to have no information upon this subject. I suppose they would rather I should tread again the weary round of hackneyed arguments which we have listened to from those Benches, than that I should endeavour to throw light upon the subject by means of some new illustration. For 30 years the people of Iceland—a poor and scattered, though a high-spirited people — sustained a struggle against the power of the Danish Monarchy. They demanded legislative independence; they protested against being governed by and from Denmark; and when Denmark offered them a voice and a seat in her Diet they refused it, because they would be in a minority there, and because that Body, as they said, cared nothing and knew nothing about their concerns. In 1874 the Danish Government at last yielded, and conceded what may be called legislative independence to the Icelandic Parliament. Ever since then things have gone on with comparative smoothness and harmony. The Icelanders are not yet contented, because they desire that the seat of administration, which the Danes keep at Copenhagen, should be transferred to the capital of Iceland. They have, therefore, only got half the Home Rule they demanded, and one-half of the Home Rule we propose to give to Ireland by this Bill.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): What is the distance between Iceland and Denmark?

MR. BRYCE: The noble Lord will find that by looking at the map.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: About 1,000 miles I think.

MR. BRYCE: About 1,100; I will make the noble Lord a present of another 100 miles. The distance makes no substantial difference to my argument. It was just as easy for the Danes to say that they knew much better what was good for the Icelanders than the Icelanders did themselves, as for us to say that to Ireland; and it was more obvious—it was even more natural—for them to insist that Home Rule meant separation, than for them to say that Iceland was a poverty-stricken country and could not prosper unless under the wing of Denmark. I wish to read to the House a few lines which I have just received from an eminent Icelander, to whom I had written for the latest information on this subject. He says—

> "The relations between the two countries are now incomparably more peaceful than they were before 1874, owing to the recognition by the Constitution of the Icelanders as a people capable of taking care of themselves; owing to the quieting effect that reliance on recognized national rights engenders; owing to the attention of the people having been diverted from an agitation which left them idle to cultivate the arts of hatred to the multifarious element that constitute the development of internal resources and national progress. A return to the bitter disaffection prevailing previous to 1874 or anything like it is now an impossibility."

But, Sir, there is another class of instances furnished us by modern Europe where nations have had this problem presented to them, and where they have shrunk from grappling fairly with it. When confronted by disaffection due to unsatisfied national sentiment, they have refused to recognize and give legitimate scope to that sentiment. What has been the consequence? Do hon. Members recollect that for some years before 1830 there was a constant struggle going on between Holland and Belgium? The Belgians demanded some recognition of their nationality, some separate institutions for Belgium; the Dutch, in their national pride, refused. In 1830 the Parisian Revolution fanned the embers into flame. The Belgians rose; Holland remained obstinate; and at last, because she had refused moderate concessions, she lost Belgium altogether. The same is the moral of the relations between Denmark and the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. During many years the German population of these Duchies continued to plead for a due recognition of their differences from the rest of the Danish Monarchy; but the Danes said —"No; we are and will be one nation; we will make no exception in your favour. You are Danish subjects; Danes you shall be." The Danish language was taught in all the schools of Schleswig, and every spark of German nationality was to be trodden out. What was the consequence? The discontent of Schleswig and Holstein found sympathy in Germany, and the Germanic Powers came in. You will say that there is no great Power to interfere between us and Ireland. That is quite true. It is not always in the same way that these problems are solved. But they find their solution nevertheless, and it is one which punishes the pride and obstinacy of a dominant race. Schleswig and Holstein kept up their discontent so long, that at last the hour arrived for which they had been waiting, and Denmark saw herself deprived of those Provinces which a policy of moderate conciliation would have enabled her to retain. We have also the case of Russia and Poland and Finland. Russia allowed Finland autonomy; and it is at this day a peaceable, prosperous, and contented Province of the Czar's Dominions, inspiring him with no fear of conspiracies or revolts, although the frontier of Finland comes almost to the gates of St. Petersburg. Russia refused to deal in the same spirit with Poland, and what were the consequences? She has, indeed, or she seems to have, crushed Poland; but I ask hon. Members whether they desire to see this country imitate the methods by which Poland has been crushed? This force of nationality is a great force in human affairs. The hon. and learned Member for Plymouth (Mr. Edward Clarke) spoke on Thursday night with some contempt of the feeling of nationality. I do not say that it is always a good thing. It is one of those sentiments which, though primarily and usually good, because it binds men together by a common devotion to a fine idea, may also become a destroying power and the instrument of evil. It works for good or ill, just as you choose to treat it. But it is a force which Governments ignore at their peril. I submit that the wise and prudent course for statesmen to take is by giving such recognition as they can to the principle of nationality to make it what it ought to be, a fertilizing stream, and not a devastating torrent—a means of fostering and ennobling national life, and not a source of disaffection and hatred. Sir, I am surprised at some of the speeches on this side as regards the motives for bringing in this Bill. There was a speech made by the hon. and learned Member for Somerset (Mr. Hobhouse), in which he asked why we could not do for Ireland in this House everything we thought she needed? My hon. and learned Friend did not sit in the last Parliament. If he had done so, I think that, with his fair mind, he would not have asked such a question. What did we see in the last Parliament? There was much Irish legislation; there was, indeed, very little else than Irish legislation; but it was almost always opposed by the Irish Nationalist Members; and we on this side of the House, who promoted it, never had the satisfaction of feeling that it was the kind of legislation which the Irish people wanted. We complained of the behaviour of those Members; but we came at last to feel that they were justified in declaring that this House is not a fit place wherein to legislate for Ireland. We are accused of putting forward this Bill as a counsel of despair. Sir, I do not support it as a counsel of despair; I do not support it as the only alternative to a long course of coercion, although I believe such coercion to be the only alternative policy; but I support it because I believe it to be a good thing in itself. I believe that Ireland will be better legislated for in a Legislature in Dublin by its own Members, because that Legislature will be in sympathy with the feelings and will understand the needs of its fellow-citizens. We, in this Parliament — English and Scotch Members — are ignorant of the wants of the Irish people. We vote at the sound of the division bell, as the Party Whips tell us. ["Oh!"] That has certainly been the rule of hon. Members opposite, even more than of Members on this side; and what does the Government do? The Government is guided by its Chief Secretary, and the Chief Secretary is guided by the permanent officials at Dublin Castle, so that to talk of Ireland having any real self-government is altogether idle, because Ireland is governed in and through this House, in which Irish Members are in a small, and usually, also, an unpopular minority. Now that so many of us are being reproached with recent conversions on this subject, I should like to read to the House a few sentences of an article which I wrote three years ago, in order to show that I, at any rate, have not changed my opinion on this point. This is what I wrote—

> "Acts are passed for Ireland, administrative policies are adopted in Ireland, and defended by the Government on the floor of the House of Commons, which those who know Ireland know to be mistakes, sure to end in failure. If they related to English affairs, English Members would be interested; one could talk to them in private; one could appeal to them in debate; the newspapers would be used: public opinion would check an erring Ministry. But where the mistake relates to Ireland this cannot be done. Since they do not understand Ireland the English and Scotch majority deliver their votes into the hands of the Government, the Government delivers itself into the hands of the Chief Secretary; and even if an English Member here and there is found who, knowing something of Ireland, can protest against the blunders he sees a Chief Secretary committing, he protests in vain, for he finds no more support in English public opinion or in the Press than he does from his uninformed brother Members."

It is idle to think of legislating satisfactorily for Ireland in a House in which the Irish Members constitute a small minority out of sympathy with the majority—a House chiefly composed of Members who have never been in Ireland, and have no direct personal knowledge of Irish conditions and Irish sentiment—a House whose acts and votes are checked and nullified by another and an irresponsible House, in which there is not a single Representative of Irish national feeling. The thing most necessary to us in this matter at this juncture is to look facts fairly and fully in the face. I have felt this strongly in reading the powerful speeches delivered during the Easter Recess of my right hon. Friend the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen), whom I am sorry not to see in his place. He seems to me to speak like a man who does not see—who, at any rate, does not realize—the dominant facts of the situation. Those who desire a strong, repressive Government for Ireland talk as if, in order to succeed in ruling and pacifying Ireland, England and Scotland need only to put their foot down; and we have had this very day in the newspapers a vigorous and trenchant expression of that view from the Leader of the Tory Party. He says what Ireland wants is a Government that will govern

> "Consistently and resolutely for 20 years—a Government that does not flinch, that does not vary—a Government that she cannot hope to beat down by agitations at Westminster—a Government that does not alter in its resolutions or its temperature by the Party changes which take place at Westminster."

That is a very happy description of the kind of Government we need from the Head of the late Government, which did not renew the Coercion Act just before the General Election, which courted the favour of the Nationalist Party during the Election, and which proposed to suppress the National League after the General Election, when it saw itself on the point of inevitable defeat. Sir, if we look for a Government that will be resolute for 20 years we are hardly likely to find it in that quarter. Now, I admit that England and Scotland can govern Ireland in that way. We in Great Britain are 30,000,000 of people; we have got the men; we have got the ships and the arms; and we have got the money too; and if Great Britain chooses to put her foot down, she can crush Ireland under an iron heel. But let me ask this question—Is this what the British people wish or mean to do? If our Government were a despotism, Sir, or such an oligarchy as ruled before the Reform Act of 1832, I could understand my right hon. Friend the Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen) or the Marquess of Salisbury making this proposition. But what are we? We are a democracy, Sir—a modern democracy. A modern democracy is fitted neither by its methods of government nor by its sentiments for a policy of that sort. A democracy would not consent to, and, if it had consented, would never persist in such a policy. A democracy has a short memory; and although it might, in a moment of exasperation, pass severe laws, it would soon forget the occasion of those laws and repeal them. A democracy loves equality, and it could not bear to think, as it would be apt to think, that in ruling by stern laws it was oppressing the masses of the people in the interest of a landlord class. A democracy has a tender conscience, and a dislike—perhaps too strong a dislike—of severe methods; it would be pained by the fear that it was doing injustice and sanctioning harshness. A democracy loves freedom, and it would refuse to put into the hands of a Government such as the Marquess of Salisbury contemplates that suspension of the Irish representation, that subjection of Ireland to arbitrary rule, which would be necessary for his purpose. I am not arguing now whether in all this democracy may be right or wrong, or whether we have done foolishly or wisely in making our Government a democracy. With such questions I am not concerned, for what I ask the House is to realize the present facts and their consequences. I say that we are a democracy, and that we must, therefore, govern on democratic principles. I may be asked—"Is it possible, then, for democracies to govern? Are you not admitting that they cannot?" I answer that it is possible for a democracy to govern, but only on democratic principles. This is a point which is convincingly illustrated by the example of the United States. I have noticed that throughout this debate hon. Members have been appealing to the Civil War in America, and the conduct of the Northern States in that supreme crisis, as a reason and precedent for our keeping down Ireland. The argument, when once the facts have been duly mastered, points the other way. A part of the United States rebelled on behalf of one of the worst of causes in which men ever took up arms. The North, animated by a strong sentiment of nationality, and by a hatred of slavery, determined to put that rebellion down, and did put it down. So we, if Ireland were to secede, would determine to keep her attached to this Island, and by force of arms we should succeed. But it is not in war that the chief difficulty lies—it is in governing afterwards. What did the United States do when the Civil War came to an end? First of all, they tried the experiment of governing the Southern States by military occupation, and they found that that system broke down, because it was impossible to keep the people in subjection and the country tranquil by military force alone. Then they tried to govern it by the disfranchisement of all who took part in the war against the Union; and they handed over the Government to the negroes and a number of Northern adventurers, and that system broke down. Outrages, perpetrated upon the negroes or on the Northern men who had come down into the Carolinas and Tennessee, became frequent, and could not be checked by the Civil Authorities. The condition of things in the South during those years was a scandal to the country. Then at last, with the strong practical sense which becomes a free people, and which especially distinguishes the people of America, they came back to their original principles. They set up the Southern States as self-governing communities on the old lines; they restored the suffrage to all citizens, declaring those who had taken part in the war to be exempt from further consequences; and then the outrages came to an end, and those disorderly Southern communities became speedily prosperous and law-abiding. The example of the United States is the strongest possible case you could have to show that a democratic system must be true to itself, and that only so can it succeed. I have endeavoured, in this argument, to address myself to those hon. Gentlemen who follow the lead of the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) in denying the need for an Irish Legislature. But there is another group of Members who are also very doubtful as to the support they will give to this Bill. They say they wish to go with us, but that there is one respect in which they desire alterations in the present scheme. They are anxious to retain the Irish Members in the Imperial Parliament. I believe that the Government have repeatedly stated that they look on the whole question of the presence of Irish Members in this House for Imperial purposes as a question open for unprejudiced consideration in Committee. Do my hon. Friends desire anything further? Do they wish the Irish Members to remain here for all purposes? Do they mean that these Members shall vote upon

English and Scotch Bills not affecting their own constituents—Bills as to which they have neither interest nor responsibility? Do they also wish every question that has been fought out in the Irish Parliament to be fought again over here? Such a scheme would be so contrary to the principle and purpose of this Bill, that I can only suppose that my hon. Friends mean that Irish Members should vote on none but Imperial questions. If that be so, they will make a great mistake if they oppose this Bill, which does not conclude this question, and which, as has been intimated by the First Lord of the Treasury, is susceptible of Amendments such as they desire. As to the cases of Scotland and Wales, these are cases which are not now before us. I do not believe that there exists in Scotland any demand for a separate Legislature. If ever such a demand is made by the Scottish people with anything resembling the volume of demand now made by Ireland, it will be time enough for us to consider it; and when it is considered it will be dealt with upon its own merits. No one who knows the Scottish people will doubt that they will obtain whatever they seek. But I venture to ask hon. Members below the Gangway whether they have realized the effect of the decision they will give if they vote against this Bill? We are exposed here to what I may call a triple fire. Besides the fire that comes from the Benches opposite, and that we receive from some of those who sit behind us—the noble Marquess and those who act with him—we have had, if not a volley, yet some dropping shots—I hope they will be nothing more than dropping shots—from below the Gangway. I ask those hon. Members to consider what the result will be if they join the noble Marquess and the Tory Party in throwing out the Bill? We know what the Tory policy is. It is force. It is repression, prolonged and stern repression. What did the Marquess of Salisbury tell his followers on Saturday night? "Remember," he said to them, "that you are the most powerful Party." Yes, Sir; they are numerically the most powerful of the Parties opposed to this Bill; and if this Bill should be rejected, and the reins of Government should unhappily pass to them, it is their policy that will and must prevail. Do hon. Members below the Gangway who quarrel with this Bill on some of its minor details—do they reflect that the consequence of their vote will be to throw power into the hands of the Tory Party, and open up for Ireland another era of coercion for the two peoples, another era of exasperation and hatred? I do not wish to use a single word of reproach to hon. Members below the Gangway. I know perfectly well that most of them—nearly all of them—are acting from high and pure motives. I believe that many of them are acting in a way that is painful to themselves, and in a spirit, I may say, of self-sacrifice. But I do ask them to consider seriously whether they are not playing the game of their opponents; whether they are not being made a cat's-paw of; whether they are not throwing away, if they vote against this Bill, out of dislike to some of its details, and in the hope, apparently, of what they call a federal scheme—which they will not get from the Party opposite—whether they are not throwing away the best chance offered us in this century of healing the secular strife between the two countries? The opinion of the whole Irish race throughout the world has welcomed this Bill—has expressed its gratitude for it. [*Laughter from the Opposition.*] I am glad of that scornful laugh. It shows the sentiments which hon. Members opposite entertain. It shows how low is their view of human nature, as well as of Irish human nature, when they cannot feel the worth of such a welcome. We, I hope, do feel both touched and encouraged by the reception which the Irish race throughout the world has given to this Bill. [An hon. MEMBER: What about Ulster?] I ask hon. Members whether, in view of that reception, and with the hope which this measure holds out, they are ready again to launch us on that angry sea of perplexities on which we have been tossed since 1801? Sir, the pride and the fears of a certain section of Liberal Members, and what I venture to call the short-sightedness of another section of Liberal Members, may endanger this Bill; but we shall feel, whatever happens, great comfort and satisfaction in the thought that the relations of the Liberal Party, and I will say, also, of the English people, to the Irish people are now different from what they have ever been before since the Act of Union. It was painful to many of us in the last Parliament to have so often to vote against the Irish Members when we knew that, although we might think them misguided, they were acting for what they held to be the interests of their country, and in obedience to its will. I hope that all that is at an end, and that the Irish people will know, henceforth, that they have friends and helpers in England. Sir, the democracy of England—the new-born democracy of England—is prepared to do what is right by the Irish people; and I trust that the knowledge of its purpose and its sympathy will enable the Irish people to await in a calm and law-abiding spirit the fulfilment of their wishes—wishes whose justice we have now, at last, admitted, and for which, in this House and out of this House, on every platform in Great Britain, we shall not cease to do battle.

MR. A. W. HALL (Oxford): The House has listened with great interest to the able speech of the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; but it is quite evident that the hon. Gentleman feels that the battle he is fighting is a losing one. Indeed the hon. Gentleman attempted to fulfil a difficult task, which is altogether incapable of fulfilment, when he attempted to answer the arguments of the right hon. and learned Member for Bury (Sir Henry James). I will not say how far I think the hon. Gentleman has succeeded in demolishing those arguments, because it is impossible that my opinion on the subject should coincide with his own. Nor will I follow him in his researches, which took him as far as the North Pole. Those researches were interesting, but I think the remark of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) considerably demolished their relevance. The hon. Gentleman attempted to startle the House by the announcement that we are on the eve of a Dissolution. Speaking for this side of the House, I may say that we are in no degree afraid of a Dissolution; and I have no doubt the hon. Gentleman feels that, whatever alterations or concessions may be made or can be made in regard to the Bill, it is absolutely impossible that it should pass into law. I think, nevertheless, that we had a right to expect that the Prime Minister would regard the verdict of this House, when it shall have been delivered, as something approaching a final verdict. I should have thought that the Prime Minister would recollect, and no one more gladly, that the Parliament is one which has not only been in existence for a very short time, but that it is also a Parliament mainly of his own creation. It is the most democratic Parliament probably that ever sat within these walls; and yet we are now told by the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that so little can it be trusted to represent the opinion of the people of the country, both educated and uneducated, that if it rejects this Bill it is to be immediately dissolved. [*Irish cheers.*] No doubt, the Irish Members will be glad to find any escape from the consequences of a defeat. I would submit this to the House generally, as well as to the Irish Members—that it is impossible for the Bill to pass into law. Everybody knows that it cannot; and under such circumstances it must be for the interests of everybody concerned, and particularly for the interests of Ireland, that it should be rejected by a large majority. Its rejection by a large majority will tend to clear away, at all events for a time, the wild visions which are entertained by some of the Irish people, at the instigation of the Nationalist Party, of some phantom independent Parliament which we, the English nation, will never grant, and which it is simply idle to attempt to create. Therefore, I venture to submit that the best thing the Irish Members can do is to accept the defeat which this House in its wisdom will give them—although I certainly do not expect them to do so with anything like a good grace. As far as Her Majesty's Government are concerned, I think the best course for them to adopt is to accept their fall as gracefully as they can, and to endeavour by really wise and salutary laws—[An Irish MEMBER: Coercion and emigration.]—to establish the future commercial prosperity of Ireland. There cannot be the slightest possibility of a doubt that the House of Commons cannot accept this Bill. If it were to be passed the future *status* of the House of Commons, as has been clearly shown by the right hon. and learned Member for Bury (Sir Henry James), would be completely revolutionized, and not only revolutionized, but it would take an entirely different form from anything this generation has ever known; because, instead of being the supreme power in the State, it would have to acknowledge the presence of a rival Parliament, which, if not co-equal and co-ordinate with itself, would eventually become co-equal and co-ordinate. I confess that I am jealous, and I hope that other hon. Members are also, of the dignity of this House; and if there are no other reasons against this Bill—and the air is full of such reasons—I should vote against it and work against it simply because it has been clearly proved, in the course of this debate, that in a substantial degree it would derogate from the dignity and the power and the honour of this House. That assertion will, of course, be questioned not only by those who support the Bill, but by the Irish Members; but if it is denied that the new Parliament proposed for Ireland is to be co-equal and co-ordinate with the Imperial Parliament, I am certainly surprised that the Irish Members should seek to resign their proud position as Members of this ancient and famous Assembly to become Members of this brand new Legislative Assembly on College Green. It is only on the hypothesis that instead of a mere debating Assembly the Parliament on College Green is to be the powerful Parliament of a separate nation that they are willing to make an exchange which on any other hypothesis would be ludicrous. It is a good gauge of what the Imperial House of Commons will lose by the Bill when Irish Members are willing to exchange their future position in it for one in the Irish Parliament. I believe that the instincts of this House and of the people out-of-doors would be altogether against any derogation of the dignity of the House of Commons, and of any shrinkage of the national horizon. Then why not follow our instincts? If we had done so the Bill would never have got beyond a first reading. It is only out of respect to the Prime Minister—a respect which would be accorded to no other living man—that the House of Commons has consented to read this Bill a first time, and thus to enter upon a path which the Chief Secretary called a path of peace; but which most people consider to be a path not of peace, but of war, which will lead us neither to security nor to glory. It has been said that we cannot govern a people except by their own consent. But by whose consent? We think it would be by the consent of the majority of the people of the United Kingdom. The hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) told us the other night that Ireland was a nation. Since then, however, we have heard that she consists of two nations. I do not care whether Ireland is one or two nations; at any rate, she is not a foreign nation, but an integral part of the British Empire; and the question we have to ask ourselves is, what proportion does she bear to the whole? It is admitted that in the past Ireland has been atrociously misgoverned; but surely England has done much of late years to entitle her to absolution, having freely confessed and atoned for the faults of bygone generations. We fully admit, and will go on admitting it, it will give the Irish Members pleasure that Ireland has been atrociously misgoverned in the past. One cannot read of the misgovernment of Ireland without a blush of shame at the selfishness of English traders; and there was never greater mischief done than when the Irish Parliament itself consented to become the medium whereby the woollen industry was choked and throttled in that country. Looking back upon the history of the country, one cannot be surprised at that feeling of hatred which, like some malignant demon, seems to spring up from time to time, marring and seeking to crush and stamp out all attempts on the part of this country to atone for the cruel past; but we must not run away even from the demon of hatred; it must be confronted, and we must try to live it down, and to do our best not to deserve its execration. I must also admit that of late years we have not been owning our faults with regard to Ireland. We have treated her, no doubt, too much in the spirit of Party; we have too long allowed Irish affairs to enter into our miserable Party strife and despicable Party calculation, and we are now reaping our reward. We have heard distinguished Members of this House uttering mock heroics over political opponents "stewing in Parnellite juice," and we have then seen them simmering and cooking in that very juice themselves. But now they are ready to confess that, unless the Kingdom is to be rent in twain, nonsense of that sort must be put a stop to, and that the time has come when English Gentlemen should say to one another — "Brother, brother, we are both in the wrong." A way must be found by which to deal with Ireland and Irish affairs in an Imperial and not in a Party fashion. If the Leaders on both sides are unable to devise means—and I do not deny that there may be difficulties—then we of the rank and file must try to do so, and we have the game pretty much in our own hands. I hope it is not disrespectful to say that the rank and file can do quite as well without the Leaders as the Leaders can do without the rank and file. If that is so, we cannot cast all the responsibility on the Leaders; but we must bear our full share of the blame and responsibility. We are under no temptation such as that which besets hon. and right hon. Gentlemen sitting on the Front Benches to be unpatriotic. It is conceivable that a man might be willing to pursue a policy injurious to the country in order to secure the retention of place and power for himself. I do not say that that is ever knowingly done; but the motives may be mixed, and it is quite conceivable; but it is inconceivable that a man should be willing to act in that way in order to secure place and power for somebody else. Therefore, upon us must fall the blame and shame if, in future, Ireland is dealt with in the spirit of Party. If Ireland is not a foreign nation, but an integral portion of the United Kingdom, it is instructive to inquire what proportion she bears to the whole. Her population is 5,000,000, and the population of the rest of the Kingdom 31,500,000. If only the disaffected portion of Ireland be taken into consideration the proportion is 3,000,000 to 33,500,000. Does it not seem hard that 33,500,000 people should be asked to consent to the disintegration of a magnificent Empire in order to please some 3,000,000? We are prepared to give her everything she can reasonably desire, and to give her the same local self-government which we desire for ourselves; but we have a moral right to say that we cannot sanction the disintegration of the Empire, and that we must constrain Ireland for her own good. ["Oh!"] Yes; and not only for her own good, but pre-eminently for the good of our fellow-Protestants in Ulster. We must constrain you to remain within the Union, because we are bound by every tie which can bind men of honour not to desert the Protestants of Ulster. We know perfectly well that the Loyalists of Ulster look upon their subordination to a Dublin Parliament as the greatest public calamity that could befall them. So strongly do they feel this that, if all the horrors of a Civil War could be placed in one scale and their subjection to a Dublin Parliament in the other, they would declare that Civil War would be easier to bear than subjection to such a Parliament. [*Ironical Home Rule cheers.*] Irish Members, I notice, jeer whenever that argument is brought forward. I admit that it is not a pleasant argument to put forward; but it is an argument which hon. Members who support this Bill are, nevertheless, bound to keep in sight. No statesman can face the responsibility of driving a section of the British race to bay without qualms of conscience. Do hon. Members who jeer really think that no people can stand to their guns except themselves? I have always been ready to give Irish Members below the Gangway credit for courage and pertinacity. I should like to know whether the time will ever come when hon. Members following the lead of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) will contemplate some real self-sacrifice for the sake of their country. I am far from saying that they are incapable of it; but I have not yet seen one item of self-sacrifice on the part of any one of those hon. Members. I am far from blaming the hon. Member for the City of Cork; but he seems to be a sort of modern Danæ into whose lap the modern Irish-American Jupiter is constantly descending in showers of gold. This is one of those cases in which we have a right to use language of restraint, and to say to the Irish Nationalists that, being within the Union, they must remain within it. We have a precedent for the use of that language. What, I would ask, has this country been doing within the last few days towards Greece? Have you not been using towards her the language of restraint? We have been saying to Greece—"We will compel you to be quiet; we will compel you to disarm; we cannot allow you, a small Power and such a small minority, to provoke a war, the consequences of which you do not perceive, but which may do you damage." That firm and wise language has been used by Ministers representing both sides of the House—by the Marquess of Salisbury as well as the Earl of Rosebery—and it is backed up by the British Fleet. Is it not the language of restraint? Is it not coercion? Is it not done in the hope that it may lead to peace? If you have the right to say to a foreign nation that they should not take a course which would lead to war, why need you be so mealy-mouthed in dealing with your own people, and go hunting about North, South, East, and West, through Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Canada, and Iceland, looking for instances of divided Empire? There are a great many examples pointing the other way — examples with which the Liberal Party used to sympathize, and with which, I believe, they sympathize still. I need not quote the genius of Cavour, or the stern determination of the United States never to be rent in twain; but I may point to the policy of Prince Bismarck in Germany. Prince Bismarck found a multitude of small States under different laws and different religions; and he fused them, although not without an effort, into one harmonious whole, and he placed on the brow of the Monarch of Prussia the Imperial diadem of Germany. Does the present Chief Secretary wish that the policy of the Liberal Party should be the exact converse of this, and that his great Chief, who finds ready to his hand a magnificent Empire, instead of adding to it, should scatter it, and lay the foundation of its final overthrow? I do not believe that the Liberal Party can look with any satisfaction upon a policy such as that. We are told that we must not go too much into details. That is very strange advice from the greatest master of detail in the world, who for three magic hours kept us listening to little else than detail. If we are to cast detail aside, then the question of high policy which we have to ask ourselves is, whether we are fit, or whether we are not fit, to be an Imperial Power? What would the effect of a policy such as this be upon our Indian Empire? The school of "perish India," if it ever really existed, has itself perished; and no one, as far as I know, has wept many bitter tears in consequence. I would ask the House if we really can consider ourselves fit to hold India, or ought we to hold India, if we have so little backbone, and so little of the Imperial genius, as not to be able to say "no" to such a proposition as this—the most monstrous and extraordinary proposal ever submitted to our Imperial people. The Chief Secretary, on the first reading of the Bill, if I understood him rightly, told us that those of us who desire to retain the Irish Members are guilty of great inconsistency in not being prepared to vote for an Irish Parliament; but it seems to me that the inconsistency is the other way, and that we are consistent in rejecting the Irish Parliament, and in not wishing to allow the Irish Members to leave this House. We know that they must be somewhere, and, therefore, we wish to have them here. We know that the seat of Irish Government must be somewhere, and we prefer that it should be here, where the scales of justice can be held evenly. We do think that we ought not to trust our Irish fellow-subjects to the chivalry of an Irish Parliament. We think that we have a right to say that the lives and the liberties of the Irish Protestants shall not be subjected to the caprices of the National League under the title and powers of a newly-fashioned Irish Parliament. And, as far as we are concerned, we are determined that no innocent lives shall be subject to the cruelty of the Curtin and the Finlay cases —a cruelty which spared neither age nor sex. The fact is—and the Irish Members know it well—that at present we feel that we are not able to trust the Nationalist Leaders, and that is one of the principal reasons we have for objecting to an Irish Parliament. There are many who know the Irish people who will tell you—and I believe rightly—that if a steadfast policy is pursued now, you may gain the hearts of the Irish people themselves. They will tell you that the Irish people are getting very sick of "Boycotting," and I am not at all sure that they are not sick of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell). It is believed, in many quarters, that if this Parliament will only deliver them from the awful tyranny of the National League they and their children will bless us; but if we abdicate our functions and make the League the King of Ireland the result can be nothing but ruin, or, as was so well said the other night—

> "Red ruin and the breaking up of laws,"

a little flaunting of regal honours by the hon. Member for the City of Cork, then Civil Law, and, finally, the reconquest of Ireland. I do not accuse the Irish Members of want of faith when they say that this Bill would really be accepted by them in good faith as a final settlement, and that their part of the bargain would be scrupulously adhered to. But what I do say is, that no Irish Member has the right or power to make any such promise or any such declaration whatever. It is absolutely impossible for any man to predict that the Irish nation will be able, even if it were willing, to fulfil her part of the bargain with regard to the payment of tribute to this country under the Bill; and, certainly, with Home Rule, and the withdrawal of capital, instead of tribute from Ireland to England, it is more likely that there would be tribute from England to Ireland, to relieve the distress that would undoubtedly prevail in that country. Suppose the tribute is not paid, and cannot be paid, and the people year by year feel the burden more and more—what would be the result? An agitation would arise against the payment of the tribute, and the hon. Member for the City of Cork would ride upon the storm when he saw which way it was going, and prescribe an Independent Republic. [*A laugh.*] It is very easy for the Irish Members to laugh; but the English Parliament has to think of these things; and I maintain that the hon. Member for the City of Cork would ride upon the popular wave when he saw which way it was going. I should like to say to the Irish Members, if I can do it without disrespect, that their insincere cachinnations prove nothing at all. They cannot deny that the tribute to this country will be paid only with extreme difficulty; and if it be paid only with extreme difficulty there will arise a strong party in Ireland against the payment of it at all. It is quite likely that in the Irish Parliament the present Irish Members may be the Conservative Party, confronted with a strong Radical Party opposed to the payment of the tribute. What, then, would the hon. Member for the City of Cork think it his duty to do? I repeat that he would ride upon the storm. Let me point out this to the House. The hon. Member for the City of Cork, being at the head of the *de facto* Government, would be entitled to belligerent rights. [*Laughter.*] I always notice that whenever anyone hits upon a point which tells the Irish Members laugh, as much as to say that it is too absurd for argument. For my part, I believe we must look at this matter from a serious point of view; and I maintain that if we establish a *de facto* Government in Ireland, that Government would by that very fact have belligerent rights. It would have the nucleus of a splendid army in the police, thousands of sympathizers in America, and the command of unlimited funds. What is the Chief Secretary going to do in such a case? No one will, I suppose, deny that Americans are a very sensitive nation; and if a Presidential Election, in which Irish votes would be of great consequence, should happen to coincide with that deplorable result, it is by no means impossible that this country may find itself engaged in a war with the United States, with a hostile country on its left flank. I think that the House is bound to consider this matter, to consider the amount of taxation in which it would probably involve this country, the vast issues of a war such as that, the injury to our trade, and that it might result in another cotton famine. One-sixth of the imports of this country are in cotton, and one-fourth of them are in textiles; and it is computed that if America were to put the smallest export duty on the cotton the sends to this country, those indussries, as far as the neutral markets of the world are concerned, would be entirely ruined. If that is the case in regard to the possibility of putting on a small export duty, what would be the consequence in the case of a war with America owing to her sympathy with the Irish Republic? These are a few of the evils, and it would be possible to give a list of immense length, which hon. Gentlemen with a light heart are willing to bring upon the nation. As to alternatives—and we have heard a great deal of talk about alternatives—I maintain that the alternative of this Bill is the alternative of war—certainly of Civil War, and, in all probability, of foreign war as well. Our alternative, at which the Irish Members scoff, is, put at its worst, only an alternative of police. It is the alternative that the law, such as it is, shall be carried out. I know I shall be met at once by the cuckoo cry—"Oh, anything in the world is better than coercion." Plague, pestilence, famine, war—anything is better than coercion. I confess that I cannot understand that line of argument. It is not because I love coercion that I cannot understand it, but because I believe you misinterpret coercion. Why is coercion right in London and wrong in Dublin? Have we not in London just been engaged in coercing a mob? What has the Home Secretary just done? He has dismissed the head of the London Police because he did not coerce sufficiently; and I would ask the Irish Members whether they think it a sin to rob a London shop, and not a sin to surround a lonely dwelling in Tipperary, to murder the men, and to mutilate the cattle? Sir, I cannot believe that this ignorant cant of a spurious Liberalism—for it is not true Liberalism, but a spurious Liberalism—can absolve any civilized community from the duty of coercing those who are murderers and bullies. I feel convinced that this Irish Thuggism can be put down by coercion if it were known that the Act would be permanent, and that it should not be put on one day in a panic and taken off the day following in exchange for Irish votes. It is an infamy to this country that Irish tenants should be compelled to crawl to their landlords by night and to pay their rent by stealth, and to implore those landlords to issue writs against them as if they had not paid their rent at all. Sir, that is an infamous and a disgraceful thing for this Parliament to submit to, and it ought not to submit to it under any circumstances. The hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) has said that democracy loves equality, and he has talked about America. But I should like to ask him how has America dealt with the question of the Socialists? How very differently America seems to safeguard life and property from what we do. Only the other day the Socialists in America tried to beard the authorities, and to-day they are hiding, cringing, and crawling from the righteous wrath of that people who have decreed that they shall be stamped out. Democracy loves equality; but democracy loves order. And what is the consequence in America? Why, that in that country everyone feels safe, and the people grow all the richer for it. Everybody confesses that we are growing poorer every day, and to my mind the fault lies very much with the policy pursued by Gentlemen on the Government Bench. But, Sir, I do believe that this crowning act of folly has awakened the nation—at least I hope so; and it is a comfort to think that there are a good many whom the Caucus would call traitors sitting on the Liberal side of the House. I think it will be found that there are a good many traitors when the Dissolution comes with which we have been threatened. In my own constituency, where Liberalism is a plant of sturdy growth, and where the Liberal leaders have always been men of high character and ability, I do not know where I could put my hand upon 50 or even 20 men who are prepared to support this policy of Home Rule. Only on Thursday last I had the honour to present a Petition to this House, numerously signed, from many villages in the neighbourhood, which I confess I was surprised to receive, because I know how entirely Liberal those villages were at the last Election. I looked down the list of names with some curiosity, and I saw name after name of voters whom at the last Election I knew to be not only strong Liberals, but even violent Radicals, who seem to have been brought to bay by this extraordinary Bill. It is better that the Irish Members should know the truth, and that they should not go away with the impression that a Dissolution of Parliament will give them exactly what they want. If they cannot get it from this House they may depend upon it they will not get it from the country. There are many not only in this House, but in the country, who will be called by the Caucus traitors; and I believe that when the hour of division strikes—and a very solemn hour it will be for the destinies of the Empire—many will be found in addition to those who, to their great honour, have made immense sacrifices, who, notwithstanding all the inducements held out to them, will risk everything rather than be untrue to the cause of that Empire.

Mr. W. ABRAHAM (Limerick, W.): Sir, I do not intend at this hour of the night to weary the House by trying to follow the hon. Member who has just sat down, and who has contributed something to the humour of the moment by the peculiar flights of fancy with which he has amused the House. I desire rather to ask the indulgence of the House for a very short time while, from the personal knowledge which I possess, I refute some of the groundless charges and libels which are so constantly hurled by some of the Members of the House against my Catholic fellow-countrymen. Sir, I am an Irish Protestant Nationalist. I belong to a sect which has played no inconsiderable part in the history of the country—I allude, Sir, to the sect of Independents who, I think, may be said to have made their mark in the history of England in the past, and who have been found ever foremost in defending the cause of civil and religious liberty throughout all our struggles. It has been my privilege to join my Catholic fellow-countrymen in their march towards freedom, and I feel proud to bear testimony to the manner in which I have been treated by the Catholic majority, and also to the treatment that my Protestant fellow-countrymen have received in the South of Ireland. What have I found? I wish to draw the special attention of the House to this. The Corporation of the City of Limerick—the Catholic Corporation—time after time has returned Protestants and Conservatives as Chief Magistrates; and when this Corporation was enabled, under the Bill introduced by the late Mr. Butt, to secure the privilege of returning High Sheriffs for the city, they returned for two years consecutively, not alone a Protestant, but also a Tory and a Scotchman. I would ask hon. Members from that part of Ireland called Ulster whether they can point in the town of Belfast to any similar evidence of toleration on their part, and in a town with a population of 70,000 Catholics? I would ask how many members of the Town Council are to be found of the faith of that 70,000? Let me take my own case. I may mention that in 1881 I received some attention at the hands of the late Mr. Forster; and what did my Catholic fellow-countrymen do? They returned me as Chairman of the Limerick Board of Guardians, as against Lord Emly, an estimable Catholic Nobleman. Not alone was he an estimable Catholic Nobleman, but one who had been converted from the Protestant faith, which gave him, I need not say, a double advantage over me, and yet at the last election for this position I was returned unanimously. In the previous election there were 44 votes polled for me, of which 43 were those of Catholics. At the General Election I had still greater reason to thank my Catholic countrymen for the proud position I now hold as the Representative of the most Catholic constituency in Ireland. It has been asserted that the Conventions which selected the Nationalist candidates were influenced and worked by two or three Members of the popular Party in Dublin. Perhaps the House will be surprised to learn, with regard to my election, that I did not know that I was to be selected as a candidate until half-an-hour before the Convention was held. The hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) will bear me out in saying that as to the election I had no communication with him directly or indirectly. There were nine candidates nominated at the Convention, and I had the honour to be proposed by a Catholic priest. I was selected for the Western Division of the county of Limerick, and the Loyal minority, as they are pleased to term themselves, felt that I had so secured the support of my Catholic fellow-countrymen that they dared not put up a Catholic to oppose me. Having said so much in regard to the position which the Protestants in the South of Ireland occupy, I need not say how we have received the invitation to combat that has been held out. No, Sir; the Protestants of the South have received too much of the affection and esteem of their fellow-countrymen, and know too well the sympathy they enjoy amongst them, to do anything so foolish. They know that once they put themselves in line with the people of Ireland in the righteous demand for self-government they are now making, there is no position in the power of their Catholic countrymen to bestow that would not be as freely bestowed on a Protestant as on any other, and probably even more freely. I do not propose to criticize the measure now before the House. I would, however, ask whether any right-minded Englishman considers that Ireland, dissatisfied, as she must be, is not a source of weakness to England; and whether, that being so, it would not be well to let Irishmen manage their own affairs. We must judge of Governments by their results; and if after 85 years of so-called Union with England, with the richest country in Europe, Ireland is to be found to-day the most discontented, the most distracted, and the poorest country in Europe, may we not say that your scheme of government has failed? Why not, then, try the experiment that has proved so successful with Canada—why not trust Irishmen when they tell the House that they will accept this proposal as a final settlement? We do not come here with a lie in our mouths; there is no conspiracy to lie amongst us; and even if there were, does the House suppose that the Irish nation at home has entered into a conspiracy with us that the public Bodies elected by popular votes are in a conspiracy, and that the Irish nation of 10,000,000 scattered throughout America, and all over the world, has entered into a conspiracy to lie to this House. No, Sir; the Irish people are willing to accept the Bill as a final settlement. We recognize in it a desire on the part of the House to do us justice, even although it be tardy. We promise to accept this measure in the interests of the various classes of Ireland, and you may safely assume that Ireland with its powerful Religious Bodies—Protestant, Presbyterian, and Catholic—and its diversified interests presents a country as capable as any other in the world to exercise all the rights and privileges of self-government. The power of the various religious communities and sects is sufficient to prevent any one of them from being tyrannical or illiberal. I do not wish to trouble the House further; but I have felt, as an Irish Protestant, that I ought to protest against the infamous charges made against my Catholic fellow-countrymen. I can assure the House that there is no danger to the Protestant minority, and if there was the possibility of such a thing, the first men who would stand up and repudiate any action to their detriment would be my Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen.

VISCOUNT WOLMER (Hants, Petersfield): Sir, I cannot but feel that the the striking speech which was made by the hon. Member for Oxford (Mr. A. W. Hall) has left those who follow him very little to say. I think, however, the House will agree with me that one of the most valuable contributions which have been made to this debate was the speech of my hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce). It was a speech which all of us must have listened to with the deepest interest, whether we had the fortune to agree with him, or the misfortune to differ from him. There is one point, however, on which, if he will allow me, I desire to correct him. I think that he altogether misapprehends the position of those Liberals and earnest Radicals who are unable to follow the Prime Minister. The hon. Gentleman has asked the House, and especially Liberal Members—"Will you quarrel with the Bill on a qustion of detail?" Now, the point on which we quarrel is not a question of detail. It is a point on which we are ready to risk the whole of our political future; and sooner than vote for the second reading of the Bill we are ready, if the sacrifice be required of us, never to enter the portals of this House again. What are the objects of this measure? It is to effect a given work which is required to be done now. We believe that for the purpose it has in view the measure is a bad one; and yet we are asked to vote for the second reading. We might just as well be asked to vote for the sending out of an army to carry out some great military operation, knowing that it had no ammunition and no food. We are told that we can amend the Bill in Committee. Imagine 670 Gentlemen making a Constitution! Why does not the Prime Minister ask us to write an epic poem? In Committee we could do the one equally as well as the other. In what position does the matter stand? The only object the Government can have in bringing in such a Bill—I think the House will agree with me—is to effect a permanent settlement of this long-standing Irish Question? And, if the Bill fails altogether to effect that object, hon. Members must admit that it is not a good Bill to pass. The whole point of the controversy lies in this—do you or do you not believe that the Bill will settle the Irish Question? If you do you ought to vote for it; if you agree that it would not, you ought to vote against it. That is the whole position put in a nutshell. I will ask the House if they consider that this is a working Bill? After all the criticisms which have been showered upon it by Members upon all sides of the House, can anybody get up and say that this is really a working Bill? As the question of the inclusion, or the exclusion from, this House of the Irish Members has been dealt with already, I will not touch upon it; but I will deal with the point which has been raised with reference to the position of the Loyal minority in Ulster. I am not going to join with those who want, if possible, to see the question settled by an appeal to arms. I will not, for a moment, contemplate the possibility of the Protestant and Loyal minority having resort to un-Constitutional means. But what I wish hon. Members from Ireland to ask themselves is this—What would be the position of affairs in Ireland with regard to the minority, looking at the matter from a purely Constitutional point of view? Cannot that minority, using purely Constitutional means, absolutely stop the working of this Bill? [An hon. MEMBER: No.] An hon. Member says "No!" That is the point which I desire to discuss, with the permission of the House. If I am wrong I hope the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) will correct me; but, speaking roughly, the minority in Ireland consists of at least one-fifth of the population, taking the minority at 1,000,000 out of a population of 5,000,000, although I believe that to be a considerable underestimate; and just as the Members from Ireland stopped the working of the machine in the last British Parliament, so the minority in the Irish Parliament would be able to bring about a deadlock. This the minority could do without resorting to un-Constitutional means. What was the position of the Irish Members in the last Parliament? Simply this—that as regards all the measures of the Executive Government—I am bringing no charge against hon. Members below the Gangway, for they could not help themselves—I am only pointing out that the position they occupied then would be occupied by the Loyal minority in the new Parliament—that as regards all the measures of the Executive Government, and as regards Bills introduced into this House, which were deliberately and determinedly directed against them, they were powerless; but as regards the ordinary Business of this House, and as regards ordinary legislation, they were able to make themselves so disagreeable—not personally—but they were able so to work upon Parties in this House, by the use of Constitutional means, as to bring legislation in this House to a standstill. [Mr. PARNELL dissented.] The hon. Member for the City of Cork shakes his head; but I should like to know where the legislative measures are which were passed in the last Parliament, and which the Liberal Party have longed for for years? Who stopped them but the hon. Member and his followers? What scheme of legislation could be made to work with one-fifth of the entire population against the Government? It is absolutely necessary to obtain the assent of a large proportion of the minority if you want the Irish Parliament to work. Personally, I would not countenance any resort to un-Constitutional means, whether by Nationalists or Loyalists; but if the minority in Ireland have recourse to them, is this House prepared to use British soldiers to put down the minority in Ireland? [An hon. MEMBER: Yes.] The hon. Member who says "Yes" is consistent; but those who are not prepared to do it are taking upon themselves a responsibility they have no right to assume in forcing this measure upon Parliament. The Home Rule Members, if they will allow me to say so, have no right to blame the Loyalists for asserting their intention to resort to un-Constitutional means; because, in their own articles and speeches, the Home Rule Members have, over and over again, asserted that if Constitutional means fail, they will be justified in resorting to un-Constitutional means. What your position has been in England to the Imperial Parliament, so would be the exact position of the Loyal minority in Ireland to the Nationalist Party if the new Parliament is established. This Bill has been hurried on unduly, with less preliminary discussion than we should give to a comparatively small measure of Local Government for the English counties. What is it that you say?

MR. SPEAKER: I must ask the noble Lord to address the Chair.

VISCOUNT WOLMER: Mr. Speaker, I wished to direct that portion of my remarks to hon. Members from Ireland, and I, therefore, inadvertently omitted to address you. The whole root of this question, so far as many of us are concerned—and I do not see why we should not be perfectly frank with hon. Members from Ireland—is, how far we can take upon ourselves the responsibility of entirely trusting them, how far we can respect their assurances, all their past acts and policy considered. Now, Sir, there has been a qualification, and a very distinct qualification, in the acceptance of this measure by the hon. Member for the City of Cork. In his speech on the first reading of this Bill the hon. Gentleman said—

> "There are, undoubtedly, great faults and blots in the measure. . . . . There are several points which it will be our duty, when the measure reaches its Committee stage, to oppose very strongly, and to press for their serious modification and amendment."—(3 *Hansard*, [304] 1130.)

And what are those points? First of all, there is the standard which should be chosen for the contribution of Ireland to Imperial Revenue. The hon. Member for the City of Cork thought it ought to be one-twentieth instead of one-fifteenth. Then there is the question of giving control to England over so large a portion of the Irish Revenue, and then there is the proposal to appoint a Receiver General, which the hon. Member for the City of Cork characterized as unnecessary and absurd. ["That is the Purchase Bill."] No doubt, it is a proposal in the Land Purchase Bill; but, then, the two Bills must be taken together. I should very much like to hear from the Government whether, if the Land Purchase Bill is abandoned, the Receiver General will be abandoned also; because I do not think, judging from the speech we have just heard, that that is to be the case. Now, what does the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) say upon the point? If I recollect aright, the hon. Member said that the Irish Party had never concealed their intention with regard to any measure an English Cabinet had brought before Parliament; and he went on to say that the Irish Party had agreed to accept this measure with modifications. That is the whole point—with modifications. I ask the hon. Member for the City of Cork whether, if these modifications are not granted in Committee, he will try in the same manner to work the Bill as if they had been accepted?

MR. PARNELL (Cork): What I said upon the Motion that leave be given to introduce the Bill was, that if we were fairly met in Committee on these points I believed the Bill would be accepted by the Irish people as a final settlement.

VISCOUNT WOLMER: Yes; but suppose the Government could not see their way to accept the modifications in Committee; suppose they did not see their way to meet the Irish Members, as the hon. Gentleman thinks, fairly, it is clear the hon. Gentleman would not be under the same obligation to try to work the Bill. I, therefore, maintain that from the very words of the hon. Member for the City of Cork we cannot be sure that this Bill will be accepted and worked by the Irish Party. But admitting that the Amendments desired were accepted, admitting that the Bill would be worked so far as the Irish Members are concerned, are we justified in entirely forgetting everything they have said during the last six years, in believing they have changed their mind or tone, or that the words which they have uttered during the last six years were not deliberately intentioned words? A great many extracts from speeches have been read during this debate. I do not propose to trouble the House with any other extracts; but I would remind the House of one phrase which is used over and over again in America and in England and Ireland, and that is that the object of the Nationalist Party is that Ireland should take her place among the nations of the earth at home and abroad. That is so, is it not? No denial comes from the Irish Members. [MR. SEXTON: We did not say "and abroad."] The words are not mine. The hon. Member for the City of Cork has said Ireland is a nation. And so is Scotland a nation. But if Ireland wants to take her place amongst the nations of the earth, it cannot be the place she occupies now, because the place she occupies now is one of equal partnership with England and Scotland, so far as other nations are concerned. ["Nonsense!"] An hon. Member from Ireland cries "Nonsense;" but I should like that hon. Member to tell us in what way Ireland is inferior as a nation to England or Scotland, so far as other nations are concerned. He clearly cannot answer that question; and therefore, if Ireland is to take her place amongst the nations of the earth, it will be a different place to that she now occupies. What is the place the Bill gives her? An inferior place to the one she at present occupies. Whereas now she occupies, as regards other nations, a position equal to that of England or Scotland, this Bill reduces her to the condition of all our great Colonies—a condition from which those Colonies are announcing their desire to emerge. I cannot believe that a proud nation—and Ireland is a proud nation—would accept a back seat like that; therefore, unless these words were lightly spoken and had no meaning, the whole object of the Irish people in accepting this Bill is that she may, at some future time, take her place as a separate nation. I cannot see any way out of the dilemma. Either these continually-repeated and carefully-formulated words were spoken without sufficient thought, in which case why should the present assurances of the same hon. Members be heeded? or else they were spoken seriously, in which case the Irish would not be satisfied with the position she occupied under the Bill, but would use it as a stepping-stone from which to exact new concessions. Moreover, I cannot see what claim hon. Members from Ireland have to be treated differently in regard to their past than other human beings. You ask us to walk by faith, and not by sight. Did you ever walk by faith? ["Yes; always."] Always! I should think that if there was one man who walked less by faith than others it was the hon. Member for the City of Cork. Would hon. Members from Ireland be in the position they are in now if they had walked by faith as regards England, and not taken very deliberate counsel for each step they had taken? I maintain that they have no right to ask us to walk by faith towards them, when they have never thought of doing so towards us. If the past history of this country towards Ireland has been bad, surely all has not been bright and rose-coloured in the relations of Ireland towards England; and, therefore, if hon. Members from Ireland are absolutely determined to endeavour to work out the legitimate and Constitutional settlement of this great question, I maintain that they have everything to gain by delay, and nothing to lose. We have been asked to settle this question without a particle of the discussion or the time and thought that has been given to any single one of the subjects which may now be said to be within the range of practical politics. Compare the importance of this question to the importance of a Local Government Bill for England. Why, the colour of the latter pales in comparison with that of the other. This Bill for the future government of Ireland has not been under discussion as many weeks as the question of Local Government has been under discussion years. Surely, of all measures that come before this House, a measure for the making of a Constitution ought to be discussed at the greatest length and with the greatest deliberation. You may make a mistake with regard to Local Government, and what is the result? A little temporary inconvenience. But if a mistake is made in the framing of a Constitution, where does it land us? I maintain that the Government have faced the question of the protection of minorities in Ireland in exactly the same way as the framers of the American Constitution faced the question of slavery, and that the dangers of future complications and evils are at least as great in this hastily-conceived Constitution as they were in the Constitution of the United States. It is not, Sir, that we do not desire to see a settlement of this question; it is that we cannot support a measure which will not settle the question. I cannot believe otherwise than that hon. Members from Ireland do, in their hearts, feel that this question which has been started by the Prime Minister will, by the mere fact of having been brought forward by the right hon. Gentleman, go forward to a final settlement if they maintain a moderate and reasonable attitude. We are asked —What if this Bill is thrown out? That entirely depends upon hon. Members from Ireland. If they continue that reasonable and moderate line of action which they have now adopted, they will get the fullest measure of self-government which ever can be given with safety to either side. They will prove to us that they can be trusted. ["Oh, oh!"] I maintain, Sir, that men have no right to forget their past language. For six years the Irish Members have used language meaning one thing, and it is only within the last six weeks they have used language meaning another thing; we cannot forget this fact. Considering the way in which this question has been brought forward, I cannot understand why Members from Ireland, if they desire a reasonable settlement, should object to a little further delay. There are many ways in which we can help them. There are questions which I admit do not brook delay; but what I say is, do not spoil what may be a settlement of the Irish Question—always acting on the assumption that Members from Ireland mean to be reasonable and moderate—do not spoil what may be a settlement by what I may call indecent haste. [" What about evictions? "] I have no hesitation in stating my views upon the Irish evictions. There are evictions and evictions. There are evictions of men who can pay, but who will not pay, their just debts. I say that these men ought to be evicted at all hazards. But, no doubt, in the West of Ireland there have been evicted men who cannot either pay their rents at present, or pay rent at all under any circumstances. These evictions comprise one of the greatest problems which will have to be dealt with either by this Parliament or by the Irish Parliament. It is possible it would be better for this country if these men were removed elsewhere. [" No, no! "] I am speaking of the men who, it is admitted, could not make a living upon their holdings if they had no rent at all to pay. Of course, I maintain that, for the sake of the public weal of this country, and for the cause of humanity, eviction is not the best way of relieving these unfortunate men; and it is in matters such as this that an English Parliament can contribute to the solution of the Irish Question if hon. Members from Ireland desire to be reasonable and moderate. I, for one, rejoiced when I heard the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary (Mr. John Morley) say he intended to use some discretion in this matter. The present is not an ordinary state of things; it is an extraordinary state of things; and it is because the circumstances are so extraordinary and so grave, and because I cannot believe that this Bill, under any circumstances, effects a settlement of the question, that I feel it my duty to vote against the second reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*Mr. Shaw Lefevre.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

MEDICAL ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—[Bill 163.]

(*Sir Lyon Playfair, Mr. Mundella, The Lord Advocate.*)

COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL on EDUCATION (Sir Lyon Playfair) (Leeds, S.): Mr. Speaker, I do not propose to proceed with the Committee to-night. I wish that you should now leave the Chair, and then I will move to report Progress.

Motion made, and Question, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," —(*Sir Lyon Playfair,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Sir Lyon Playfair.*)

Sir ROBERT FOWLER (London): May I ask when this Bill will be taken?

Sir LYON PLAYFAIR: I will put it down for Monday.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Monday* next.

TREES (IRELAND) BILL.

CONSIDERATION OF LORDS AMENDMENTS.

Lords Amendments *considered.*

Page 1, line 14, after ("for,") insert ("life or").

Mr. GILHOOLY (Cork, W.): I beg to move that the House disagree with the Lords in this Amendment, for the reason that there is no reason why a tenant holding under a statutory term should not have the same privileges as a tenant holding under a lease.

Motion made, and Question, "That this House doth disagree with The Lords in the said Amendment,"—(*Mr. Gilhooly,*) —put, and *agreed to.*

Page 1, line 15, leave out ("renewable for ever,") and after ("the,") insert ("second section of the").

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I beg to move that the House disagree with the Lords Amendment. It appears, at first sight, hardly more than a verbal Amendment; but two different kinds of machinery were provided for registering trees, and as the Bill stood originally the most simple was adopted, but by the insertion of these words, "second section of the," you revert to the old discarded machinery.

Motion made, and Question, "That this House doth disagree with The Lords in the said Amendment,"—(*Mr. Chance,*) —put, and *agreed to.*

Page 1, line 30, leave out ("shall be entitled to").

MR. MAURICE HEALY (Cork): I beg to move that the House do agree with the Lords in this Amendment.

Motion made, and Question, "That this House doth agree with The Lords in the said Amendment,"—(*Mr. Maurice Healy,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Page 2. line 1, leave out ("or,") and insert ("and").

MR. MAURICE HEALY (Cork): I beg to move that the House do disagree with the Amendment. The reasons for disagreeing are practically the same as those advanced for moving to disagree with the first of the Amendments. The Lords Amendment, in this case, is practically a consequential Amendment, arising out of the first; therefore, having disagreed with the one, it is necessary to be consistent that we should disagree with the other.

Motion made, and Question, "That this House doth disagree with The Lords in the said Amendment,"—(*Mr. Maurice Healy,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Line 3, after ("Act,") insert—

"Provided always, That no claim may be made under the provisions of this sub-section or the preceding sub-section exceeding in amount the value of the trees at the time of the claim"

—the next Amendment, read a second time.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I beg to move that we disagree with the Lords in this Amendment. I really do not understand it. It provides—

"That no claim may be made under the provisions of this sub-section or the preceding sub-section exceeding in amount the value of the trees at the time of the claim."

I believe it is an ordinary principle of law that a man may claim what he likes, however unreasonable it may be. It is one thing to make a claim, and another thing to get that which is claimed. On the other hand, if this merely says a man is not to get more than he is entitled to, that is an elementary principle of law, and does not require the wisdom of the House of Lords to support it.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth disagree with The Lords in the said Amendment."—(*Mr. Chance.*)

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I think if the Amendment were altered so as to read, "exceeding in amount the value of the improvements at the time of the claim"—leaving out the word "trees," and substituting "improvements"—I think we might agree to it. We should in that way limit the meaning of the word "improvements" to that in the Act of 1870. The hon. Member's proposal was made in the House of Lords; but it was found that if accepted it would have an operation that was not contemplated. In the Act of 1870 it is provided that not only shall the tree be taken into account, but also the planting and subsequent labour upon it, the idea being to give the tenant the benefit resulting from such improvement to the letting value of the land. I think the objection may be met by substituting "improvements" for "trees."

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): The Bill, as originally passed by this House, precisely accords with the right hon. Gentleman's idea.

MR. JOHN MORLEY: The proper method of dealing with this would be to accept my Amendment, and substitute the word "improvements" for "trees."

MR. CHANCE: I withdraw my Motion to disagree with the Lords' Amendment.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

MR. JOHN MORLEY: I beg to move to insert the word "improvements," in place of the word "trees" in line 4 of the Amendment.

Amendment proposed to The Lords Amendment, line 4, leave out the word "trees."—(*Mr. John Morley.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

Amendment, as amended, *agreed to.*

Line 4, leave out sub-section (3.) and insert—

"A tenant making a claim in respect of trees under the Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act, 1870, shall not be entitled in respect of the same trees to any of the privileges conferred upon tenants by the said Act of the fifth year of the reign of King George the Third, or the Acts amending it, including this Act."

Mr. MAURICE HEALY (Cork): I beg to move that the House agree to the Lords Amendment, subject to the Amendment I have put upon the Paper—namely, line 7 of Amendment to page 2, line 4, after "Act," to insert—

"But such claim may be made notwithstanding that the tenant has been evicted for non-payment of rent."

Mr. SPEAKER: The course for the hon. Member to take would be to move to amend the said Amendment.

Mr. MAURICE HEALY: Then I propose to amend the Lords' Amendment by adding at the end of it—

"But such claim may be made notwithstanding that the tenant has been evicted for non-payment of rent."

Amendment proposed to amend the Lords Amendment, by adding at the end—

"But such claim may be made notwithstanding that the tenant has been evicted for non-payment of rent."—(*Mr. Maurice Healy.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

Amendment, as amended, *agreed to.*

Page 2, leave out Clause 4.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I beg to move to disagree with this Amendment. Clause 4 is intended to remedy a very serious defect in Section 10 of the old Act. That section is very carelessly drafted; and it is almost unintelligible, as many of the sections of the old Act are. It might be urged that if a tenant, who had registered a certain number of trees, cut down a single tree the section would come into operation, and the landlord would be entitled to come in and take the property from him. That would be a great hardship. A man might have a large number of trees—500 perhaps—and if he cut down one miserable old trunk his right to the rest of the 500 would be gone. That is the reason why this clause should be left in the Bill, to clear up the doubt which might exist. It provides that so long as the tenant remains on his holding he shall have the real benefit of the Act, and that it shall only be on his quitting the holding that the landlord may say, "You must not take the trees."

Motion made, and Question, "That this House doth disagree with The Lords in the said Amendment,"—(*Mr. Chance,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Committee *appointed,* "to draw up Reasons to be assigned to the Lords for disagreeing to the Amendments to which this House hath disagreed:—Mr. John Morley, Mr. Marjoribanks, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. Chance, Mr. Gilhooly, and Mr. Sexton:—To withdraw immediately; Three to be the quorum.

MOTION.

——o——

TRAMWAYS PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 3) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Charles Acland, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under "The Tramways Act, 1870," relating to Birmingham and Western District Tramways, Birmingham Central Tramways (Extension), South Birmingham Tramways (Extension), and South Staffordshire and Birmingham District Steam Tramways, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Charles Acland and Mr. Mundella.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 213.]

House adjourned at One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 18*th May,* 1886.

MINUTES.]—Select Committee—Office of the Clerk of the Parliaments and Office of the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, The Duke of Buckingham and Chandos and the Lord Kintore *added.*

Public Bills — *Second Reading* — Municipal Corporations (Scheme Confirmation) * (90); Hyde Park Corner (New Streets) (88); Companies Acts Amendment (82).

Committee—Labourers (Ireland) Acts Amendment (51-120).

Committee — *Report* — Incumbents of Benefices Loans Extension * (89).

Third Reading—National Debt * (100).

Provisional Order Bills—*Second Reading* — Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) (No. 2) * (84).

Third Reading—Local Government (Ireland) (Fermoy) * (32), and *passed.*

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that Her Majesty had (by Commission) appointed the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos Speaker of the House in the absence of the Lord Chancellor: The said Commission was read.

TREES (IRELAND) BILL.

Returned from the Commons with one of the amendments *agreed to*, some agreed to with amendments, and some disagreed to, together with Reasons for such disagreement: The Commons amendments and Reasons to be *printed.* (No. 117.)

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER NO 128).

The evidence taken before the Select Committee from time to time to be *printed*, for the use of the Members of this House; but no copies thereof to be delivered, except to Members of the Committee, until further order. (No. 118.)

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS.

Return by railway companies respecting railway accidents, together with reports upon certain accidents inquired into, for the three months ended March 1886: *Presented* (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

HYDE PARK CORNER (NEW STREETS) BILL.—(No. 88.)

(*The Earl of Elgin.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (The Earl of ELGIN), in moving that the Bill be read the second time, said, that it would be in the recollection of their Lordships that the improvements at Hyde Park Corner had been carried out by the Office which he had the honour to represent. The estimate for the whole of the works was £30,000; but the sum actually spent was £27,538, of which sum £20,000 was contributed by the Metropolitan Board of Works, and £3,000 by the Duke of Westminster, and the balance, £4,538, was defrayed out of votes granted by Parliament. Of this last sum £3,000 was spent in removing the reservoir from St. James's Park, and the remainder, £1,538, was spent on improvements. Having briefly referred to a former attempt at legislating on the subject, the noble Earl said, that last year a Bill was introduced into the House of Commons, and was re-introduced this year. It was there referred to a Hybrid Committee, which had power to hear witnesses, and before which the Metropolitan Board of Works was, he believed, requested by the Committee to appear, and was represented by counsel. He mentioned that to show that the whole subject was before the Committee of the other House. The Bill, therefore, which he had to present was the Bill of the Government, and also of the Committee of the Commons. It proposed, in the first place, that that portion of the space now covered by the improvements which had been included in the Green Park, and which, therefore, was a portion of the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, should be severed from that parish, and should be considered for the future as situated in the parish of St. George's, Hanover Square. That would relieve the parish of St. Martin's from the obligation of maintaining that portion of the road. The Bill, in the next place, proposed that the maintenance of the roads should in future be defrayed in equal moieties by the Metropolitan Board and the Vestry of St. George's, Hanover Square. On that part of the Bill he did not wish to say anything more, as the Metropolitan Board had petitioned against it, and would be heard in opposition. The Bill was in the same position as a Private Bill, and would go through the same process. Therefore, he did not wish to anticipate what the Metropolitan Board might have to say before the Committee. With regard to the three open spaces, which were not at present in a very satisfactory state, he had to point out that their future maintenance was not transferred by the Bill. These spaces would be laid out by the Committee under the Presidency of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales; and it might interest their Lordships to know that the last payment to the sculptor for the statue of the Duke of Wellington was due next March, so that it might be expected that the Committee would be able soon afterwards to proceed with the work. When their work was completed, the maintenance of these spaces would devolve upon the Board of Works.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*The Earl of Elgin.*)

THE EARL OF POWIS said, that as the noble Earl had referred to the opposition which he had successfully made on the former Bill, he was happy on the present occasion to say that he thought the Committee of the House of Commons had come to a reasonable settlement of the question, and that he supported the Bill as it now stood.

EARL FORTESCUE complained that Mr. Shaw Lefevre had barbarously cut down a handsome group of trees, about 50 years old, which were an ornament to that wide blank space, and masked its irregularity; besides affording shade, which would have been very welcome in hot weather to the numbers often detained there some minutes by the traffic before being able to cross. Whenever required for the further improvements talked of, indeed, but not yet begun, the trees could have been taken down in a single day, though they would have been much better left. But, "drest in a little brief authority," that Minister must needs show it by hurriedly removing what could not be replaced in 40 years. It was a great pity that his want of taste and of practical knowledge of what was required there had, to a certain extent, marred a really great improvement.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2^a accordingly, and *committed:* The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 51.)

(*The Lord FitzGerald.*)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to order).

Clauses 1 and 2 *agreed to.*

Clause 3 (Definition of "agricultural labourer").

LORD FITZGERALD said, that since the second reading of the Bill he had considered the objections that had been raised to the clause; and he now proposed that the definition of "agricultural labourer" should be modified, and that the term should apply to agricultural labourers proper, and to include within it hand-loom weavers and fishermen who ordinarily, during any period or periods of the year, did agricultural work on the land of another for hire. He hoped that the Amendment would meet with the sanction of the House.

Amendment *moved*,

In line 18, to leave out ("repealed") and the remainder of the clause and insert ("amended to this extent that the expression 'Agricultural labourer' in said twenty-third section shall include hand-loom weavers and fishermen who ordinarily during any period or periods of the year do agricultural work on the land of another on hire for payment by wages.")—(*The Lord FitzGerald.*)

LORD ASHBOURNE said, that there was no doubt that the clause as introduced was open to very considerable criticism, since the definition of agricultural labourer was wide enough to include any man, woman, or child, who had worked for half-a-day on another person's land. That could not have been intended, and was certainly an unsatisfactory state of things, and the Amendment was unquestionably in the right direction. He did not say that any hard-and-fast line could be laid down; but he thought some words might be inserted to indicate that the period of work should be a substantial one.

Amendment *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 4 *agreed to.*

Clause 5 *struck out.*

Clauses 6 and 7 *agreed to.*

Clause 8 (Power of Local Government Board to dispense with advertisements and notices).

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN said, he objected to the proposal to give the Local Government Board a discretionary power to dispense with notices and advertisements. He held that a man whose property would be affected by the execution of a scheme sanctioned by the Bill ought certainly to receive adequate notice of the proposed transaction. There might be little objection to the exercise by the present Local Government Board of this discretionary power to dispense with notices; but, nevertheless, it would be well to pause before vesting such a power in the Board, because, having regard to the present condition of affairs, it was quite impossible to forecast what kind of Body it would be in a year or two.

LORD ASHBOURNE said, he would suggest that the discretionary power of the Board should not extend to schemes authorizing the purchase or taking of any land otherwise than by agreement.

LORD FITZGERALD said, he would undertake to bring up on Report an Amendment to give effect to the suggestion of the noble and learned Lord.

Clause *agreed to.*

Clauses 9 and 10 *agreed to.*

Clause 11 (Extension of powers of compulsory purchase).

THE EARL OF LONGFORD moved the omission of the clause, which gave the local Sanitary Authority power to compulsorily purchase land for the purpose of providing allotments for persons living in towns or villages. The existing power of purchase by agreement was sufficient. He had no desire to oppose or delay the Bill, which was for a good purpose; but he did object to that compulsory power of purchase.

Amendment *moved,* to leave out the Clause.—(*The Earl of Longford.*)

LORD FITZGERALD said, this was the most valuable clause in the Bill, and he could not consent to its omission. The alarm that it created in the noble Earl's mind was quite unfounded, for there were ample safeguards. Before the power could be exercised a scheme would, in every case, have to be drawn up and submitted for the approval of the Local Government Board; and if there was a Petition against the scheme it could not be carried out until it had been confirmed by Act of Parliament. He hoped, therefore, that their Lordships would accept the clause. No body of men had greater claims on that House than the Irish labourers, for until three years ago they had been systematically neglected, and the evidence taken before the Royal Commission showed that their habitations were most shameful. This compulsory power was not aimed at the landlord, but against the farmers, who had always been the enemies of the labourers, and who, in very many cases, would not make due provision for the dwellings of their labourers.

THE EARL OF COURTOWN supported the Amendment.

LORD ASHBOURNE said, he thought that the noble and learned Lord, in what he had said as to the dates and position of the legislation on that subject, had hardly made out a case, after the experience of only a few months, for Clause 11. Under the Acts of 1883 and 1885 Boards of Guardians, acting as Sanitary Authorities, were enabled to erect labourers' dwellings, with half-an-acre of ground, wherever they thought needful. That provision was a wise one, and it had not been proved to be inadequate. The 16th clause of the Act of 1885 also had given power to take land by agreement for the purpose of distribution in allotments; now it was sought to alter that, and enact that there should be compulsory power. The Act had hardly been at all appealed to, and any experience that had accrued since the 14th of August last certainly had not been such as to show that it had failed to secure any of the objects for which it was intended. This was entirely a different case from that of a railway or tramway referred to by the noble and learned Lord (Lord FitzGerald). There the line went between two termini, and it was necessary that there should be a power of getting over the opposition of any cantankerous person who might wish to stop the line. There was, however, no analogy between that case and the one now under consideration. In the present state of Ireland a power such as that now proposed might be used for the purpose of annoying a man who was disliked. He opposed the clause on the ground of common sense, because he considered it premature to invoke compulsion and alter the element of agreement which had been adopted as recently as last August, and which had hardly been tried at all, and which certainly had not been proved to have been a failure.

THE EARL OF BELMORE also opposed the clause.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL) said, he hoped that before noble Lords opposite dealt with this clause in the unceremonious way which was suggested they would bear in mind the origin of the clause. In the autumn of last year there had been a good deal of discussion upon the subject of this compulsory taking of land for the purpose of allotments; and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) had been very vigorously denounced for giving utterance to what were regarded as revolutionary sentiments as to the authority of

Parliament to deal with the rights of property. Subsequently, however, the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), in a speech which he made at King's Lynn, admitted the right of Parliament to make these allotments, and that, under a certain condition, it could safely be agreed to. The condition was that the scheme should be confirmed by Provisional Order. Intentionally or not, that was the proposal of this 11th clause, in which the framers of the Bill had adopted the suggestion of a distinguished Member of the Conservative Government; and, therefore, he did not see how the Friends of the noble Lord could object to it.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY said, he thought that if the noble and learned Lord had had in the practice of his former Profession to cite a case the Judges would have required him not to cite the case from memory, but to produce the actual words; and he believed that in such a case Judges would have acted wisely, because, in referring to the words of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington, the noble and learned Lord had misquoted what had been said. It was an odd way to discuss matters in the House of Lords, but he would pass it by, attributing it to the novelty of the noble and learned Lord's experience in that House. His recollection of what Lord Randolph Churchill suggested was that there might be particular cases in which the thing might be done, and safely done, if each case were separately considered by Parliament itself. But that would not be the case with the measure before the House. It was nominally to work through a Provisional Order; but it would not be subjected to all the safeguards of that procedure. That made a wide distinction in principle, for while a Provisional Order was a safeguard in England it was not so with regard to Ireland. He must, therefore, ask for wider reasons than the assertion that the noble Lord the Member for Paddington made a speech at King's Lynn in favour of the alteration of the law. He thought, with all respect, that was not a sufficient reason for altering a law recently made. They ought to proceed very carefully in this compulsory legislation. Hitherto, they had allowed the compulsory taking of land for public objects—objects which the public distinctly understood. They were now asked for compulsory powers to take land in order to enable the labourer to earn a livelihood. Before doing that let them ask how far they were to go—were they going to extend it to the small farmer, to the moderate farmer, and to the large farmer? He only wished to impress upon them that the principle was a wide one, and that it was of great importance. If they adopted it in Ireland it probably would not be confined to that country; and, therefore, he entreated them to move cautiously in the matter, and not to be misled by the words Provisional Order.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Earl GRANVILLE): I am curious to know in what respect it is irregular for the Lord Chancellor to refer to a speech made by the Member for Paddington at King's Lynn.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I said it was very unusual to base a change in the law on a speech made at King's Lynn, and I asked for wider reasons than that.

LORD FITZGERALD said, that the question was fully discussed in the other House, and met general approval, and complained that their Lordships did not take a deeper interest in the condition of the agricultural labourer of Ireland. Who were the principal supporters of the Land League and the National League? The labourers. He wished to give them the first element of civilization, a home to live in. He would quote to their Lordships an extract from the evidence given before the Devon Commission. The Rev. John Locke stated that—

> "The present condition of the farm labourer, dependent on an unsympathizing class scarcely elevated above him in education and sentiment, is deteriorating to his own condition and perilous to the community. He is not a participant in profits nor property. Daily food is the limit of his expectations; economy is, therefore, never thought of, because unavailing; and if the farmer on whose land he is settled be prevented by fall in price, failure in crop, or any other cause from affording employment, the starving labourer, reckless and unreasoning, with a vague sense of injury rankling in his mind, having nothing to lose, and a chance of gaining by change, becomes the willing tool of agrarian or political disaffection. Poverty is the chronic fever, crimes the delirium of the untended patient."

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY said, that he could assure the noble and learned Lord that that House had not shown any carelessness for the interests of the agricultural labourers; but now the noble and learned Lord came down with a letter written at the time of the Devon Commission, and tried to induce that House to pass this Bill to amend an act of last year which the noble and learned Lord himself had agreed to, and did not at that time produce this letter. During the passage of the Irish Land Act great efforts were made on that side of the House, as well as on the other side, in order to defend those interests; and it had always been felt that in all the discussions for the benefit of the farmer there was a danger of ignoring the interests of the labourer. They had passed the Acts of 1883 and 1885, and in doing so they had not stickled at any difficulties that might have arisen from the want of precedents for such legislation for the benefit of the labourers; and all they now asked on that side of the House was that those Acts should be tried, and that there should be some facts to show that they had failed before it was sought to replace them by unnecessary legislation.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (The Earl of KIMBERLEY) said, that the noble Marquess had expressed sympathy for the labourers; but sympathy that was not transmuted into acts was not very valuable, and the Government wanted the House to show its sympathy by passing this Bill. The measure came up to their Lordships recommended by very strong opinion "elsewhere;" and he should have thought that it would have been very welcome to noble Lords opposite. When, however, it became a question of transmuting the sympathy of noble Lords opposite in acts the clause which would do this was to be thrown out.

LORD ORANMORE AND BROWNE said, he would point out that there was a great difference between the year 1845, when they were on the point of a famine in Ireland, and the present time. They had passed Acts to prevent the great sub-division of land in Ireland. The Encumbered Estates Act was passed for the very purpose of enabling landlords to sell their estates, and to induce others to bring in fresh capital for making improvements and extending the holdings. The state of things before the passing of those Acts was far more miserable than anything existing at present.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR said, it was an important fact in connection with this matter that when the clause came before the House of Commons there were Representatives from Ireland, Conservative as well as Liberal, present. An Amendment proposed by a Conservative Member was, on the suggestion of the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley), adopted and incorporated in the clause, which now came before their Lordships in its amended form. No objection was taken by any Conservative Member from Ireland to the insertion of the clause in the Bill; and, therefore, when their Lordships had the unanimous opinion of the House of Commons in favour of such a provision, it did afford some indication that a change in the law was necessary.

On Question, That the said Clause stand part of the Bill? Their Lordships *divided*:—Contents 25; Not-Contents 65: Majority 40.

Resolved in the *negative.*

Clause 12 *agreed to.*

Clause 13 (Sanitary authority or contractor may enter on land and take materials).

On Motion of Lord CLONCURRY, the following Amendments made:—Page 4, line 40, after ("demesne") insert ("home farm"); page 5, line 14, after ("occupier") insert ("according to their respective interests therein").

THE EARL OF LONGFORD moved the omission of the clause on the ground of the annoyance which might be caused to the occupier by giving a vexatious right of entry on his land.

Amendment *moved*, to leave out the Clause.—(*The Earl of Longford.*)

LORD FITZGERALD defended the clause.

Amendment (by leave of the Committee) *withdrawn.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 14 (Temporary letting of allotments).

Amendment *moved*,

In line 19, to leave out ("within the meaning of that Act,") and insert ("only pending the erection of such cottage and determinable at the end of any month.")—(*The Lord Fitz Gerald.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Lord FITZGERALD moved the following new Clause:—

(Exchange of Sites.)

"Notwithstanding anything contained in the Labourers (Ireland) Acts, 1883-85, it shall be lawful for the Local Government Board of Ireland, upon the petition of a sanitary authority, to make an order that any site and plot included in a scheme made pursuant to either of the said Acts may be exchanged by such sanitary authority for another site and plot of equal area; Provided always, that the Local Government Board of Ireland shall not make any order under this section unless they are satisfied that the site and plot proposed to be substituted are as suitable as the site and plot sought to be abandoned, and unless they are satisfied that the proposed substitution is not objected to by the owner, lessee, or occupier of the site or plot proposed to be substituted."

Clause *agreed to.*

Remaining Clause *agreed to.*

Lord FITZGERALD said, he did not propose to take the Bill on Report until some day next week.

Lord ASHBOURNE suggested that as their Lordships' minds would be in a great state of excitement next week, it would be as well that the Bill should be postponed till the week after.

Lord FITZGERALD: I would willingly have assented to that course but for the speech of the noble Marquess opposite on Saturday, which appeared to me to predicate an early Dissolution.

The Marquess of SALISBURY: Allow me to assure the noble and learned Lord that I was only judging from the signs of the times. He can get much better information on the subject than any that I can give him.

Bill to be *printed* as amended. (No. 120.)

COMPANIES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

(*The Earl of Dalhousie.*)

(No. 82.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (The Earl of Dalhousie), in moving that the Bill be read the second time, said, it was intended to remedy certain manifest defects in the working of the Companies Acts in Scotland. Several cases of great injustice had occurred. Speaking generally, the Bill would assimilate the Law of Liquidation in the Companies Act with the Scottish Bankruptcy Law. In England a similar uniformity was brought about at the passing of the Judicature Act in 1875, and this Bill was intended to do for Scotland what that Act had done for England. The measure had been considered by the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh and by the highest legal authorities in Scotland, including the Solicitors of the Supreme Court. By all those eminent authorities it had been approved most heartily and unanimously.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*The Earl of Dalhousie.*)

Lord WATSON said, the Bill was urgently required; and he asked the noble Earl to set it down for Committee on an early day, as the few Amendments which he had to propose were already prepared.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2^a accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Thursday* next.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT, 1875.

QUESTION.

The Earl of IDDESLEIGH called attention to a case of alleged embezzlement of the funds of a registered Friendly Society by a prisoner named John Kew, tried before Mr. Baron Pollock at the Nottingham Assizes, held 15th July 1885, which resulted in the acquittal of the prisoner, on the ground that there was no proof of the registration of the Society under the Friendly Societies Act, 1875. He asked whether a copy of the rules of the Society had not been produced to the Central Office of Friendly Societies in London, been there compared with the registered copy, and having been found correct, been stamped with the office stamp; and whether it had not been accepted by the committing magistrates before whom the prisoner had been originally charged? Further, he asked whether the decision of the Court was made in view of the 39th section of the Act of 1875, with respect to the reception in evidence of documents bearing the seal or stamp of the Central Office without further proof; and, if so, whether any amendment of that section is required to give effect to the intention of the Legislature? One of the great objects of the promoters of the Friendly Societies Act was to get rid, as far as possible, of the danger of a failure of justice from equitable grounds.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL) said, that he had communicated with the learned Judge who tried the case, and he found that the ground on which the prosecution failed was that his Lordship held that there was not sufficient proof of the registration of the Society. The learned Judge proceeded on these grounds. The 11th section of the Friendly Societies Act provided for the issue by the Registrar of an acknowledgment of registration as showing that the Society had complied with the provisions of registration. This acknowledgment was, by the 10th section, conclusive proof of the registration. The learned Judge informed him that it was usual in cases of this kind to produce this acknowledgment of registration. He had not any exact information as to what evidence was proposed to be given in this particular case; but that the counsel for the prosecution did not produce any such acknowledgment was certain. What was produced, he believed, was a certified or examined copy of the rules of the Society; and he should not like to say that a copy of the rules duly authenticated might not have such statements on the face of it as to make it, although falling short of the full legal proof, *primâ facie* evidence as to the registration. There could be no practical difficulty in the production of the acknowledgment of the Registrar; and, therefore, he could not see that there was any real need for an amendment of the Act. Indeed, he did not apprehend that when it was known that it had been established that the valid proof was in the production of the acknowledgment of registration, that such prosecutions would be attended with any practical inconvenience.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY (DURHAM) BILL PETITIONS).

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS in rising to move—

> "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the validity of all petitions presented to this House for or against the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham) Bill, and of the signatures attached thereto, with a view to ascertaining how far such signatures are or are not genuine."

said, he had placed the Notice on the Paper believing that he was acting in accordance with what was the wish of the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack (Lord Herschell). It would be in the recollection of noble Lords that the noble and learned Lord (Lord Bramwell) presented a Petition against the Bill—or rather it was so bulky that it was carried to the Table by an attendant—and in the course of the debate the Lord Chancellor, who spoke in favour of the Bill, referring to the Petition, observed that from his own experience in "another place"—experience, no doubt, gained from Petitions which he had presented—that Petitions were not always what they professed to be as regarded the signatures. The noble and learned Lord also expressly regretted that this Petition was presented so late to the House that there was no time to acknowledge it. Having heard that, and believing, as he did, that this Petition was as fairly got up as these things generally were, he gave Notice of this Motion. He knew nothing whatever about the Petition until it was presented to the House, when he saw the Gentleman who had charge of it, and he assured him that it was as fairly got up as those on the other side. He should mention that the Petition was promoted by the Country Brewers' Association, and he had since received a letter on the subject in which it was stated that the canvassers employed by the brewers had strict orders only to allow *bonâ fide* signatures to be attached, and each canvasser was made responsible for the signatures in his own district, and it was added that the Petition would bear comparison with the Petitions on the other side. Upon looking into the matter to his surprise he found that there was no provision whatever for the examination of Petitions, while the officers of the House, when he mentioned the matter, were perfectly horrified at the idea of having to go through 60,000 or more signatures. It was thought that there should be a standing Committee of their Lordships' House for the examination of Petitions, and in 1868 one was appointed; but only one Report was presented, and then their Lordships thought that it was unnecessary to follow up the system. At the present moment, unless some officer of the House kindly undertook to look over the Petition, there was no other authority to do so. He believed that one of the officers had glanced through this one, and he said it appeared to be very fairly got up. He should have been perfectly content to let the matter drop at that; but he thought that the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack would agree with him that the subject should not remain there, and that they ought to go into both sides. He should be quite willing that the Petitions should be referred to some expert who should be asked to report to the House upon them. He had several objections to the Bill, which he should state at the proper time, and he looked upon the measure itself as unwise and unnecessary. If one man desired to have a glass of beer on Sunday and another man was willing to sell it to him, why should they make this an offence? It was evident that there was a very strong feeling against the Bill in the City of Durham; because, as he learnt from the papers that morning, a mass meeting of the inhabitants was held in the market-place yesterday to protest against the Bill, and it was denounced as a gross interference with the liberty of individuals, and also as piecemeal and class legislation. The meeting appeared to have numbered some thousands of persons, and the few teetotallers who made their appearance were hustled, and but for the protection of the police would have been roughly handled. Eventually they had to take refuge in the Town Hall. It was evident, therefore, that this was a question upon which some very strong feeling was entertained on both sides; and that consideration ought to weigh with their Lordships to induce them to accept his Motion.

Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the validity of all petitions presented to this House for or against the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham) Bill, and of the signatures attached thereto, with a view to ascertaining how far such signatures are or are not genuine."—(*The Earl of Wemyss.*)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL) said, it might be in the recollection of the House that in the course of the few words which he spoke on the second reading of this Bill, after a Petition had been somewhat dramatically presented by the noble and learned Lord who moved the rejection of the Bill (Lord Bramwell), he (the Lord Chancellor) suggested that it was possible to overestimate the value of Petitions, because one was not certain as to the authenticity of the signatures. That Petition, having been presented so late, was somewhat calculated to increase one's suspicions. But his observations with regard to it were a chance shot, not based on any information. Since then he had received several other Petitions relating to that Petition, among them one from Edward E. Close, of 3, Paradise Place, Stockton-on-Tees, stating that he was a Good Templar and strongly in favour of the Durham Sunday Closing Bill; that he was asked to sign a Petition in favour of that Bill, and signed a Petition which he was told was in favour of that Bill; but that he learnt soon afterwards that the Petition was against the Bill, and praying that, since his signature had been obtained by fraud, it might be removed from the Petition. That was a sample of several Petitions that he had received. So as to see whether there was any foundation for these assertions, he asked one of his officials to look through the signatures and see whether he could discover the signature of Mr. Close, and in this the official had been successful, and there could be no doubt about the matter, as the signatures in both cases were similar. In the examination of the Petition it appeared that there were in one place some 40 or 50 signatures obviously signed in the same handwriting and with the same pen and ink; and as it was found that the residences of these persons were in some cases 10 miles apart it was most improbable that they were all present when their names were signed and authorized such signatures. It therefore seemed that there was some foundation for his doubts as to the 60,000 signatures being those of 60,000 persons opposed to the Bill. How many fell within that category it would be difficult to say. In many cases it appeared that the signatures not only of the parents, but of the youngest children who could hold a pen, had been taken. These facts, he thought, were sufficient to show that the Petition was not above suspicion;

and, therefore, if the noble Earl moved for a Committee, it was obvious that with that other Petition before him it was impossible for him to suggest any argument against it.

Motion *agreed to.*

Committee appointed accordingly.

House adjourned at Seven o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 18*th May*, 1886.

MINUTES.] — SELECT COMMITTEE — Forestry, Mr. Evelyn and Mr. Albert Grey *added.*

PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*)—*Considered as amended* —Tyne Improvement.*

PUBLIC BILLS — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — Coal Mines Regulation [217]; Freshwater Fisheries * [218].

First Reading—Stipendiary Magistrates (Pensions) (No. 2) * [215].

Second Reading—Government of Ireland [181] [*Fourth Night*], *debate further adjourned ;* Conveyancing (Scotland) Act (1874) Amendment [127].

Reports of Select Committee—Shop Hours Regulation [Nos. 155 & 156].

Committee — Public Health Acts (Improvement Expenses) (*re-comm.*) [153]—R.P.

Withdrawn — Stipendiary Magistrates (Pensions) * [212].

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — Gas (No. 2) * [214].

Second Reading — Gas and Water * [206]; Water * [207].

QUESTIONS.

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PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS—UNION OFFICIALS.

MR. ALEXANDER BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it be true that Messrs. Joseph W. Robb and Adam S. Weir, officials in the Belfast Workhouse, took an active and prominent part at the last Parliamentary Election for the Southern Division of Belfast, and that they received payment for their valuable services at that election; whether they requested and obtained leave of absence from their ordinary duties, without any deduction from their salaries, by the Guardians of the Belfast Union; whether they will be called upon to refund the money so obtained; and, what notice will be taken regarding their representation to the Guardians of the Belfast Union, to whom they alleged they wanted holidays?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): A similar Question respecting these two officials was asked some time since by the hon. Member regarding other elections, and my answer now is the same as on that occasion; that the facts are substantially as stated; that the officers obtained leave for the purpose; that the Local Board have taken action which they trust will prevent the Union officers from acting in similar capacities for the future.

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—KINGSTOWN HARBOUR.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, What steps will be taken to remedy the present unsatisfactory state of the East Pier of Kingstown Harbour, which has lately been covered with coarse loose gravel, to the great inconvenience of pedestrians?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton): The roadway of the East Pier at Kingstown has been recently repaired with gravel precisely in the same way as has been done for more than 40 years, and is not in an unsatisfactory condition; the Commissioners of Public Works are quite ready to afford every facility to any Public Body who may desire to carry out improvements from their own funds in adapting the pier for a promenade.

SALMON FISHERIES (IRELAND)—THE SUIR FISHERIES.

MR. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether any steps can be taken to have the prosecutions instituted by the Conservators of the River Suir against fishermen for net fishing between the towns of Clonmel and Carrick on Suir, a right enjoyed by the fishermen for generations, postponed, pending the proposed inquiry into this subject by the Select Committee on Salmon Fisheries (Ireland)?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, the Government had no power to suspend prosecutions in cases where they were not the prosecutors; but he understood that the Inspectors of Fisheries had communicated with the Board of Conservators, expressing their opinion that under the present circumstances prosecutions ought to be suspended for such offences, and owners of the fisheries left to enforce their rights. Beyond that the Government could not go.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND) — MID-DAY MAIL SERVICE FOR THE TOWN OF BALLINAMORE, CO. LEITRIM.

Mr. HAYDEN (Leitrim, S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the Postmaster General will have steps taken to re-establish the mid-day mail service for the town of Ballinamore, county of Leitrim, and thereby prevent the inconvenience caused to traders by having their letters detained in Carrick-on-Shannon Post Office for over twelve hours?

The SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton): In reply to the hon. Member, I beg to say that nothing is known at the Post Office of the Mid-day Mail Service to which the hon. Member refers. It does not seem that there ever was a Mid-day Mail Service to Ballinamore; and after careful inquiry in Ireland no trace can be found of any application for the establishment of such a Service.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—MOUNTNORRIS POST OFFICE.

Mr. ALEXANDER BLANE asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the local post office at Mountnorris, county Armagh, has been removed from the house of Mrs. David M'Cullagh, where it has been for fifty years; whether Mrs. M'Cullagh has had the management of it for the last twelve years, during the lifetime of her husband, without a single complaint; whether Mrs. M'Cullagh was superseded because she neglected to put forward her name to the Department as her husband's successor; and, whether her re-appointment will be considered?

The SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. Arnold Morley) (Nottingham, E.) said, that Mr. Walker had been appointed, and the memorial on behalf of Mrs. M'Cullagh was not received for some time afterwards and unless it was shown that the present occupier of the office was disqualified he was afraid the case could not be reconsidered.

CHARITY COMMISSIONERS — INKBERROW CHARITIES.

Dr. FOSTER (Chester) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, If he is aware that the trustees of certain charities at Inkberrow, in the county of Worcester, are all of them ex-officio trustees; if a new scheme for the management of the charities has recently been established by the Charity Commissioners; if the inhabitants of the parish have not frequently, by resolutions at public meetings and other methods, requested the addition of a small number of representative trustees; and, if the Charity Commissioners have declined to accede to their request notwithstanding that the action of the ex-officio trustees upon certain matters has caused grave discontent in the parish?

The VICE PRESIDENT (Sir Lyon Playfair) (Leeds, S.): To explain fully the circumstances to my hon. Friend, I would have to state the case at much greater length than the House would tolerate. But I will place a full answer in his hands. The Commissioners have informed the inhabitants why it was that they are precluded from appointing representative trustees.

HARBOURS—PUBLIC HARBOUR TRUSTS.

Sir JOHN JENKINS (Carmarthen, &c.) asked the President of the Board of Trade, If he will take steps to obtain returns from Public Harbour Trusts of their income and expenditure upon the same lines as in the case of Railway Companies?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Mundella) (Sheffield, Brightside): The systematic rendering to the Board of Trade of the Returns referred to by the hon. Member is part of the general question of the regulation of harbours which is now under consideration, and which would require further legislation to enfore. The matter is receiving the attention of the Government.

EXPENSES OF REGISTRATION OF ELECTIONS (IRELAND).

Mr. PETER M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he has received Copy of Resolution recently passed by the Sligo Board of Guardians, to the effect that they have no funds available for payment of the expenses of this year's Parliamentary Revision, and claiming that as the work was rather for Imperial than local purposes it should be paid for out of the Consolidated Fund; and, whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer purposes allocating a sum for this purpose same as last year?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The Resolution referred to has been received, and the Guardians have been informed that the sum provided by Parliament last year as an exceptional relief to local rates in the peculiar circumstances of the case was limited in amount, and that, save as to such amount, charges of this kind have always been deemed to be local charges. I am not aware of any intention on the part of the Treasury to make similar grants this year; and it is obvious that if such a change were contemplated legislation would be necessary, and should be made applicable to the Three Kingdoms alike.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1870—APPEALS IN CO. DONEGAL.

Mr. BERNARD KELLY (Donegal, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a fact that 100 tenants on the Musgrove Estate in county Donegal had their rents reduced by the Sub-Commissioners; whether the landlord has appealed in an enormous proportion of the cases; whether the appeals are to be heard at Lifford; whether the majority of the tenants are so poor that it is utterly impossible for them to get to Lifford, distant, in many cases, 60 miles from them; and, whether the Government will endeavour to get such arrangements made, by holding Appeal Sessions in Killybegs or elsewhere, as will enable the tenants to be present at the hearing of the appeals?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Over 100 notices of appeal were served by the landlord in this instance; but of the 100 cases 70 were withdrawn. None of the cases from the Union of Glenties are to be heard at the sitting at Lifford on the 31st of this month. The Commissioners assure me that they endeavour, as far as possible, to arrange their sittings to meet the convenience of the parties named. I have asked them in this case to observe the rule with particular attention.

THE CHANNEL ISLANDS—REVENUES OF GUERNSEY.

Mr. BOYD-KINNEAR (Fife, E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Under what account the revenues appear which are drawn by the Crown from the Island of Guernsey in respect of taxes on conveyances, tithes, seigneurial dues, and other sources; and, whether, if these do not appear in any account, he will lay a Return upon the Table of the House showing the amounts received under each head, the cost of collection, and the manner in which the sums are disposed of?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): The Crown Revenues of the Channel Islands do not form part of the Revenues of the United Kingdom, and the Parliament of the United Kingdom has no jurisdiction over them. They consist of rents of lands and certain feudal dues payable from time immemorial to the Sovereign of the United Kingdom in respect of the Duchy of Normandy. Certain expenses of civil government in each are paid out of the Crown Revenues of the Islands, and the surpluses, very modest ones, are brought to account as part of the small branches of Hereditary Revenue. The Sovereign has surrendered the Hereditary Revenues in return for the Civil List. These surpluses in consequence are paid over to the Exchequer, and form part of the Revenue of the United Kingdom for the year. They form the only set-off against all the charges for Army, Navy, Militia, and other Imperial expenses which are defrayed from the taxes of the United Kingdom. I do not like adding to the number of Returns which we are called on to print, and I should not propose to lay upon the Table a Return of Revenues over which the House of Commons has no control unless special reasons can be shown for doing so.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—DUNGANNON.

Mr. WILLIAM O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether of the eleven magistrates who adjudicated upon the Orange moonlighting charge at Dungannon, ten were Orange magistrates, several of whom have themselves taken a prominent part in Orange demonstrations; whether the witnesses were described by the Crown Solicitor as "witnesses hostile to the Crown;" whether their evidence was given with extreme reluctance and prevarication, and was at variance with their original statements to the police; whether, notwithstanding, it was proved that ten farmers' houses had been visited by night; whether William Doran, Rachel Ramsay, Isabella Somerville, Mrs. Mawhening, James Cuddy, John Armstrong, James Burrows, and Jane Doran all admitted it was the defendant who visited their houses and questioned them as to whether they were Orange or Nationalist; whether James Cuddy admitted that the defendant was disguised with a false whisker, and several other witnesses admitted that it was with difficulty they recognized the defendant, although he was well known to them as a neighbour; whether the magistrates refused to admit the evidence of the police as to the circumstances under which the defendant was arrested; whether steps will be taken to prevent Orange magistrates from adjudicating in party cases in Ulster; and, whether the Lord Chancellor has taken any notice of the conduct of Colonel Burgess, the Orange magistrate, who, on his own responsibility, directed the prisoner to be discharged without a prosecution?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): This is a long story and not a new one. It has been thought advisable to obtain a Report on the subject from the Resident Magistrate who assisted in the adjudication of the case. He states that of the 11 magistrates—exclusive of himself—who adjudicated not more than three belonged to the Orange Society, and of the remaining eight he does not know of any who have taken part in Orange demonstrations. The witnesses were merely reported by the police as being supposed to be able to prove so-and-so. They were described by the Crown Solicitor as being hostile, as they would not prosecute; but they never said they would, and they did not prevaricate in any way. One witness proved that the defendant asked who lived in a certain house and what his politics were, and the grandfather, James Cuddy, swore that he came into his house partly disguised, but that he knew him and talked with him, and regarded it as a practical joke. Beyond this there was no evidence of importance. The Resident Magistrate states that he paid particular attention to this prosecution, and that upon the evidence it would have been impossible for any Bench to return informations. There is nothing in the case to lead one to suppose that it was not rightly dismissed, although it was a proper case for investigation. The defendant had not been arrested at the time when the matter was brought under the notice of Colonel Burgess, whose action was confined to an expression of opinion which was no bar to further action. As a matter of fact, the case was reported to the Resident Magistrate; and if his advice had been taken, and the matter reported to head-quarters, it is probable that no question would have arisen. The officer of police has been informed that he ought to have acted on that advice.

Mr. WILLIAM O'BRIEN: What action will be taken regarding Orange magistrates who sit on Party cases, as they constantly do in the North?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: I should have to consider what steps could be taken to prevent magistrates of any particular complexion from acting in a judicial capacity, and as at present advised we cannot, I think, take cognizance of the matter.

HOME RULE—THE METHODIST COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES, DUBLIN.

Mr. JORDAN (Clare, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he is aware that the Rev. George Hammond, a Methodist Minister, Ballymacarrett, Belfast, lately wrote a Letter, which appeared in *The Methodist Times*, London, in which he dissented from the action and Resolution against Home Rule of the Irish Methodist "Committee of Privileges," Dublin, and stated that—

> . "As a Methodist Minister, he would expect more toleration from an Irish Parliament than from the Flag and Drum Christianity of Ulster;"

whether, for so writing, he has been boycotted; whether his church has been attacked; whether, during the performance of Divine Service, large stones have been thrown at the doors and windows of the church; whether a number of worshippers had to rush out from the building to protect it from the mob; and, if such a state of things obtains, what course will be taken to prevent its continuance?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The police report that Mr. Hammond wrote the letter referred to in the Question, and has been censured by the Methodist Body for doing so; but that he has not been "Boycotted," nor has his church been attacked, or its windows broken. On Tuesday evening, the 4th instant, a stone was thrown at the door of the church by some evil-disposed person passing by, but no injury was done, and so far as can be ascertained the worshippers did not rush out to protect the building. At any rate, there was no mob there, and no complaint on the subject was made at the time, or since, to the police.

PUBLIC HEALTH—SMALL-POX AT WOOBURN, BUCKS.

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) asked the Secretary to the Local Government Board, Whether, in view of the recent severe outbreak of small pox in the parish of Wooburn, Bucks, due to the rags used in paper making at the Wooburn Mills, he will take steps to secure the disinfecting of all rags so used to prevent the possibility of contagion?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. BORLASE) (Cornwall, St. Austell): The Board have learnt, with much regret, of the outbreak of small-pox at Wooburn. They have no authority under which they can secure the disinfection of rags used in paper-making so as to prevent contagion. They have, however, with a view to assisting the Local Authorities and those concerned in paper-making, collected and disseminated the fullest information respecting the circumstances of disease-production by means of rags, and the best means of disinfecting efficiently without injury to the rags. They have also enjoined the adoption of vaccination and revaccination of persons engaged in paper-making and the rag trade as the most available means of saving individuals from the infection of small-pox.

ARMY—THE NILE EXPEDITIONS—THE RATIONS.

COLONEL BROOKFIELD (Sussex, Rye) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, in the recent campaigns on the Nile, a large proportion, or all, of the rations issued to Her Majesty's troops were supplied by American contractors?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL OF ORDNANCE (Mr. WOODALL) (Hanley) (who replied) said, it was not true that any large proportion of the rations issued to Her Majesty's troops had been supplied by American contractors. As a matter of fact, the rations supplied to the troops on the Nile comprised about 24 different articles, and of those one article only was mainly, though not exclusively, supplied by an American contractor.

ARMY—CONTRACTS FOR FORAGE.

COLONEL BROOKFIELD (Sussex, Rye) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, in accepting tenders for the supply of forage to the mounted branches of Her Majesty's Army at Home, any preference whatever was given to British contractors?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL OF ORDNANCE (Mr. WOODALL) (Hanley) (who replied) said: Forage for the troops at home is secured by public tender. There has not been any instance in recent years of a contract for such forage being held by a foreigner.

ARMY—THE ORDNANCE SURVEY—THE ROYAL ENGINEERS.

ADMIRAL SIR JOHN COMMERELL (Southampton) asked the honourable Member for North West Staffordshire, If he will take into favourable consideration the extension to the Engineers now employed in the Ordnance Survey at Southampton the same privileges of full-pay leave (according to length of service) which are enjoyed by civilians?

MR. LEVESON GOWER (A LORD of the TREASURY) (Stafford, N.W): The First Commissioner (Lord Henry Lennox), in March, 1874, decided that the military *employés* in the Survey Department of this Office were to be placed upon the same footing as regards holidays as the civil assistants, and the Director of the Survey (Sir Henry James) thereupon gave directions that the military *employés* were to receive working pay for Good Friday, Queen's Birthday, Coronation Day, and Christmas Day in future. At present, therefore, the Royal Engineers receive working pay for general holidays, but are not allowed any period of annual leave with working pay. It is, however, to be remarked, with reference to a comparison of the relative positions of the Royal Engineers and civilians employed on the Survey, that whereas the civilian would draw no pay for any period of leave exceeding the regulated period he was entitled to—the maximum allowed being three weeks—the Royal Engineer may obtain a furlough for a much longer time without losing his regimental pay, and he is paid his military pay for seven days in the week, while the civilian receives pay for only six days. In the circumstances, the First Commissioner does not propose to make any change in the existing system.

SOUTH AFRICA—ZULULAND—THE PAPERS.

MR. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether he can say at what date the further Papers on Zululand will be laid upon the Table; and, whether there can be included in these Papers a summary statement of the expenditure of Imperial and other public moneys in and for Zululand (including the Reserve Territory) from the termination of the Military operations in 1879 up to the present time?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN) (Denbighshire, E.): The Papers to which the hon. Member alludes are in preparation; but it has been thought that it would be premature to present them to Parliament before they could include some account of the progress made by Sir Arthur Havelock, the Special Commissioner for Zulu affairs, towards a settlement of the questions which he is now discussing with the Boers in Zululand and with the Zulu Chiefs. I am in hopes, however, that it may be possible, with due regard to this object, to complete and distribute these Papers soon after Whitsuntide. They will include as complete a summary of the expenditure in and for Zululand—including the Reserve Territory—since 1879 as can be made.

THE PACIFIC BLOCKADE OF GREECE.

MR. CROMPTON (Hants, New Forest) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether his attention has been called to the statement in the newspapers that, in consequence of the blockade in Greece, food was becoming scarce in the island of Skiathos, and whether any steps are being taken to prevent the pacific blockade interfering with the food supply in the Greek Islands; and, whether any of the Members of the Greek Parliament have been prevented by the blockade from going to Athens to attend their Parliamentary duties there?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): There is no reason why the blockade should interfere with the supply of food to the Greek Islands, or with the attendance of Members of the Greek Parliament at Athens, as both supplies and Members can be shipped on board foreign vessels, against which the blockade is not operative. The question of the means of bringing the Members to the capital has been mentioned to the British *Chargé d'Affaires* by the Greek Government, and if either for that purpose or for the relief of any distress in the Islands any special facilities are required, Her Majesty's Government will be ready to authorize the British Commander-in-Chief of the Blockading Squadron to make the necessary arrangements.

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL—THE SCHEDULES.

MR. RAIKES (Cambridge University) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether it is his intention, before the conclusion of the Debate on the Government of Ireland Bill, to print for the information of the House the (five) Schedules which appear in blank in the print of the Bill already delivered?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian), in reply, said, that he did not propose to fill up the Schedules during the debate on the second reading. Undoubtedly, those Schedules would have to be filled up before the Bill went into Committee; but, in the opinion of the Government, the contents of the Schedules would not materially affect the second reading of the measure.

ARMS (IRELAND) BILL.

MR. LEWIS (Londonderry): I beg to give Notice that on the Motion of the Prime Minister for giving precedence to the Home Rule Bill I will move to add the following words—"except in the case of the Arms Act set down for this day."

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): Having regard to the Motion of the hon. Member for Londonderry, I would wish to ask the hon. and gallant Member for North Down (Colonel Waring), in respect to the Notice given by him to move the rejection of the Arms Bill, whether he intends to proceed in accordance with that Notice to move the rejection of the measure?

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.): It is not my intention to move the rejection of the Bill.

MOTIONS.

—o—

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND ORDERS OF THE DAY—THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL DEBATE AND THE ARMS BILL.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian), in moving—

> "That this day, and on succeeding Tuesdays and Fridays, the Order for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Second Reading of the Government of Ireland Bill, when it is set down among the Orders of the Day, have precedence of Notices of Motions and Orders of the Day,"

was understood to point out to the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Lewis) that the Amendment of which he had given Notice to that Motion was not quite regular.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That this day, and on succeeding Tuesdays and Fridays, the Order for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Second Reading of the Government of Ireland Bill, when it is set down among the Orders of the Day, have precedence of Notices of Motions and Orders of the Day."—(*Mr. Gladstone.*)

MR. LEWIS (Londonderry) said, that he did not propose to move the Amendment of which he had just given Notice.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I think it would be for the convenience of the House if the right hon. Gentleman is able to give us any information as to the probable date of the termination of the debate on this Bill. ["Oh, oh!"] I think that is not an improper question to address to the right hon. Gentleman, although, of course, I do not wish to press him for a more definite reply than he is now able to give; but, having made inquiry in this quarter of the House, I believe that it would be perfectly compatible with the desire of all those sitting behind me who wish to take part in the debate if it were brought to a conclusion on Friday next. I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he can give us any information as to the views of the Government upon the matter?

MR. LEWIS: As it may be the only opportunity which the House will have of calling the attention of the Government to the serious position in which they are placed with regard to the renewal of the Arms Act—[*Cries of* "Order!"] I am perfectly in Order. The Arms Act is one of the Orders of the Day—it is upon the day's proceedings, and it will be affected by the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman if it be carried. The Arms Act of 1881 expires within a fortnight of the present time—that is to say, upon Monday week. The Government have been pressed over and over again upon the subject of their intention to renew the Act. I, myself, on the 6th of February, gave Notice—[*Cries of* "Order!"]

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I rise to Order. I wish to point out that the Arms Act (Ireland) Bill is not one of those proposed to be postponed by the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman, it being subsequent to the Government of Ireland Bill.

MR. SPEAKER: Inasmuch as the Motion proposes to postpone the Notices of Motion and Orders of the Day on Tuesdays and Fridays, and as there is reason to suppose that the Arms Act (Ireland) Bill will be among the Orders of the Day on those days, the hon. Member is in Order in referring to that Bill.

MR. LEWIS: I was drawing the attention of the House to the fact, which should be known to no person better than the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, that I have never allowed him a week's rest with regard to this subject. On February 6 I drew the attention of the Government and of the country to the fact that this Act expired on the 31st of May; but I was told upon that and upon every occasion that my action on the subject was premature. I have distinguished authority for my present course of action. Last Session, when I put Questions to the Government with regard to the renewal of the Crimes Act, I was turned, some six times over, from the Prime Minister to the Chief Secretary, and from the Chief Secretary to the Prime Minister, and so backwards and forwards, without being able to obtain a satisfactory reply, with the result that in the middle of June nothing had been done in order to renew that Act. Upon the present occasion I want to deal very frankly with the House. I have pressed the Government over and over again upon this subject without the smallest result until about three weeks ago, when I received a most peculiar answer from the Chief Secretary. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary then said that the Arms Act had no operation in Ulster, except in Londonderry and Belfast, although the Government found it necessary to keep the Act in operation over nearly the whole of the remainder of Ireland. [*Cries of* "Order!"]

Mr. PARNELL (Cork): I rise to Order. I wish to ask whether the hon. Member for Londonderry is entitled to go into the merits of the renewal or the non-renewal of the Arms Act on the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman?

Mr. SPEAKER: The only latitude in that direction which would be allowed would be for the hon. Member to argue the necessity of giving priority to the Arms Act in the event of this Motion being carried.

Mr. LEWIS: That is the very subject which I am endeavouring to press upon the House, and much more upon the country. Although the Arms Act is in force everywhere outside Ulster, the Chief Secretary has informed us that it would be useful in preventing large bodies of men in the North of Ireland from carrying arms. Now, what was the answer of the Chief Secretary as to the urgency of renewing the Arms Act?—

> "The Government are informed that this Act is of very little use for the purpose of repressing outrage."

Then why was it in force outside Ulster?

> "But they are informed that it is likely to be useful in preventing large bodies in the North of Ireland carrying arms."

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): And elsewhere.

Mr. LEWIS: The right hon. Gentleman has since added the words "and elsewhere."

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: Not since, but at the time.

Mr. LEWIS: I cannot find the words in any reports. I, however, accept the statement of the right hon. Gentleman, and allow that he meant the North principally, and "elsewhere" in a subsidiary point of view. Need I comment upon the extraordinary character of the answer as to the urgency of renewing the Act? We have been told by the right hon. Gentleman that in certain events which will probably occur Ireland is likely to be inflamed. In that event are Irishmen upon both sides to be allowed to arm themselves? [*Cries of* "Order!"]

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I rise to Order. I wish to know whether the hon. Member is in Order in referring to a past debate in this House not upon the same subject?

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not see that anything that the hon. Gentleman has said in that direction is out of Order. It would, however, be quite out of Order on his part to attempt to initiate a debate on the Arms Bill. The hon. Member must confine himself strictly to giving technical reasons for giving priority to the Arms Bill.

Mr. LEWIS: Notwithstanding the repeated interruptions which I have met with, I must continue my endeavour to prove from the words of the Government, from the words especially of the right hon. Gentleman, that there is every need for urgency in this matter. He has told the House that, in certain events which are not very improbable, there is likely to be breaking out of disorder of a most violent character. How did they find the Government heeding this matter? By putting the Bill down day after day, without the slightest hope of opportunity of asking the decision of the House upon it, and now, on the 18th May, with this Act of Parliament, which has been in force for five years with the sanction of the Government over nearly the whole of Ireland, about to expire, the Government are playing with this Bill as they played with the Crimes Act last year, until it will become impossible to pass the measure before the 1st of June. With reference to this question of renewal, I stand in a very peculiar position. I do not agree with some of my hon. Friends who sit near me. I do not agree with some of those hon. Members who, when they were told that it is necessary to renew this Act in order to repress Protestant Ulster, determined to oppose it. I say, in the name of the peace and prosperity and safety of Ireland, let us have this Act renewed. We know from the right hon. Gentleman who is responsible for the peace of Ireland the necessity that exists for the renewal of this Act. He has himself sounded a note of alarm, and he himself has informed us that, in his opinion, unless this Act is renewed there are likely to be outrages of a most alarming kind in Ireland. [“Hear, hear!” *and Home Rule cries of* “No!” *and* “Order!”]

MR. PARNELL: I rise to Order. The hon. Member for Londonderry has distinctly addressed to you an argument in favour of the renewal of the Arms Act, and I wish to know whether he is in Order in doing so?

MR. SPEAKER: The Bill referred to is a Continuance Bill, and the hon. Member is endeavouring to give his reason why it should have priority in the Government arrangements. I have already told the hon. Member, and I now repeat the observation, that he would be quite out of Order in discussing the merits of the renewal of the Act.

MR. LEWIS: I am in the recollection of the House whether I have uttered a single sentence which is not pertinent to the question whether the Government have exercised due speed in endeavouring to obtain the renewal of this Act. I wish to read to the House a letter which I have this day received, and which is a perfectly genuine one. I will not, for obvious reasons, mention the writer's name; but the letter will show the urgent necessity that exists for the Government exercising a little more speed with regard to this matter. What do we know as to what may happen? Why, last Sunday night, a poor wretched man named Quighley, while sitting in his own house, had his brains dashed out with shot.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is now going into the merits of the case. The latitude I have allowed him was to state the reasons as to why the Government should give precedence to the Bill; but he is going into the merits of the case and defending the merits of the Arms Act. That should be reserved for the debate on the Bill.

MR. LEWIS: Then, Sir, I must ask the leave of the House to read the letter from a gentleman whom I know in County Derry. I wish to ask whether the letter, which comes from a gentleman of good standing—[*Home Rule cries of* “Name!”] There are very grave reasons why I should not give the name of the writer. The letter is as follows:—

> “Dear Sir,—Will you kindly give something towards a club which is being formed here for the purpose of arming the Loyalist working men? We wish to form the nucleus of a fund, and we shall be very much obliged if you will give something to it.”

I have no intention of giving anything. But the Government must know, from their own information, that there are the strongest reasons, in the present state of affairs in Ireland, for not delaying this measure, so that it may not be in the power of every man in Ireland to arm himself on the 1st of June. I am the oldest Representative but one from Ireland in this House, and, in the interests of peace and good order, I thought it incumbent upon me to perform the duty I have endeavoured to discharge.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY (Glasgow, Blackfriars): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the question that has been put to him, I wish to say that those who live in Ireland have a right to know whether the Government really intend to renew this Act or not. I will not enter into any merits of the question on one side or the other; but I think it stands to common sense and to common reason that in the present state of Ireland it would not be desirable that arms should be distributed in every part of the country. If the Government do not renew the Arms Act the responsibility will lie at their door for many of the outrages which might otherwise have been prevented.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): In reply to the last speaker, all that I can say is that I do not believe that the Arms Act is calculated to prevent a single crime or outrage of this kind committed in Ireland during the last 12 months. I am anxious to do the fullest justice to the consistency of the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Lewis); but I submit to him that his remonstrance upon this subject ought not to be addressed to us, but to the two hon. Members who sit beside him. On the first night after the Easter Holidays I announced my intention to bring in the Bill. On the Tuesday night there was, unfortunately, a "count-out." The Bill was read a first time on the Thursday, and I then expressed my earnest desire to take the second reading on the Friday if agreeable to hon. Members from Ireland, both above and below the Gangway. I was informed that the following Monday would be more convenient to them. I put it down on Monday, and I found to my amazement that two hon. Gentlemen, both representing constituencies in Ulster, had put on the Paper a Motion in identical terms to read my Bill a second time "this day six months." The consequence of that action, which must have been intentional and deliberate, is that though the Bill has been put down every day since, excepting Wednesday, and though I was in attendance every night until the arrival of the fatal hour, the Bill has been blocked; and it is owing to their action, and to no action of mine, that the Bill is not at this moment in the House of Lords.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) said, that there was another matter on which he would venture to make an appeal to the Government. While quite feeling the force of the Prime Minister's observation that it was impossible to make any exception in favour of the Motion that stood in his name whilst postponing other Business, yet he thought he was fairly entitled to ask the Government to give him some pledge that no further commutations of pensions should take place until the House had had an opportunity of expressing its opinion on his Motion. The Motion was placed on the Paper in 1881, when there had scarcely been any commutations for the 20 years preceding, certainly not one per year; while between 1882 and 1885, since that Motion appeared on the Paper, nearly 330 commutations had taken place. On one class of these commutations he alleged absolute illegality, though, of course, it was quite impossible he could now say anything in support of that contention or ask the Government to admit it. He also alleged that the rates of commutation for other classes of pensions had been enormously excessive, varying from 10 years to 30 years. As his Motion had been delayed through no fault of his own, he hoped the Government would accede to his request.

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.) said, that he thought he was entitled to say a word by way of explanation. The block put in his name to the second reading of this Bill was the natural consequence of the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman in his reply to the hon. Member for Londonderry, when he told him that the use to which the Government looked to put this Act was to prevent large bodies of men assembling in the North of Ireland. Under those circumstances, he thought that the Ulster Members were entitled to secure a hearing for themselves on this subject at an earlier hour than half-past 12 o'clock. This was his object.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): Then why did you take the block off?

COLONEL WARING said, that for that purpose only was the block put on. He withdrew it on the previous night because he perceived the urgency of the case for bringing on the Bill; but he did not, therefore, forfeit his right to express his opinion on the language of the right hon. Gentleman in replying to the hon. Member for Londonderry. He thought it right to take that opportunity of expressing those opinions, and he might say to the right hon. Gentleman that he did hear the word "elsewhere." It appeared not to have reached any of the other hon. Gentlemen around him or the Reporters' Gallery. Indeed, it was perhaps not intended to be heard further to the left. He had thus explained his reason for putting the block on the Bill and afterwards withdrawing it. He would have another opportunity of expressing his opinion on the Bill itself.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.) said, in reply to the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) that in consequence of the Notice of Motion placed by him on the Order Book of the House impugning the action of the Treasury with respect to the commutation of pensions and asking for a Select Committee to inquire into the matter, Her Majesty's Government did not think it would be respectful to the House for the Treasury to proceed with any further commutations until the House had had an opportunity of expressing an opinion on the Motion.

Mr. MATHER (Salford, S.) observed that he had been fortunate enough to obtain the first place on the Paper that night for his Motion with respect to technical education. He did not, however, wish to delay the Business of the Government, and he should not bring it on that night. He hoped, however, that an early opportunity of discussing a subject of such importance to the commerce of this country would be afforded, after the Government had secured the second reading of the Bill for the Government of Ireland, which was of such National and Imperial importance.

Mr. RAIKES (Cambridge University): I also have a Notice of Motion on the Paper. It is one which would not take any great time to discuss, and it would probably be possible to bring it on after the debate on the Government of Ireland Bill is adjourned. But as the Motion has reference to the establishment of this House, and the appointment of the Clerks of this House, I feel that, having regard to the great loss which this country and the House has sustained by the premature death of one of whom we so recently took leave in retiring from the service of the House, it would be more respectful to his memory to postpone the Motion to this day week.

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield) said, he had a Motion on the Paper with reference to Lowe's Charity, Lichfield, which he was willing to postpone; but he hoped he might be able to proceed with it after the Home Rule debate.

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY (Glasgow, Blackfriars): I beg to point out to you —[*Cries of* "Spoken!"]—that the Chief Secretary—[*Cries of* "Order!"]—has not answered my question whether the Government intend to proceed with the Arms Bill?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I will endeavour to give the best answer in my power to the question of the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), which I admit he is perfectly entitled to put. At the same time, the best answer I can give him is an imperfect one. The House will not be surprised at that when I remind them of the peculiar circumstances of the case. I rather think there was a stage of the Corn Law Repeal Bill which was questioned and debated between two opinions and sets of Gentlemen alone, and which debate extended over 10 nights. I am not desirous to see the range of debate in this House enlarged—it is now, I think, quite sufficient—but at the same time I must observe that if there be any occasion on which debate is justifiable it is on an occasion such as this, not only on account of the vast importance of the question—though even on that ground I may notice the importance of it has been in many ways elevated above every other subject—but on account of the special and distinct ground that there are, in point of fact, four Parties in this House engaged in the discussion of this subject, all of them having great interest in it. There is the Party opposite and the Government, who are deeply interested, of course, in defending the proposition, the responsibility of which rests upon them. Then there is a distinguished portion of the Liberal Party, who are most naturally and most justifiably very anxious to explain both to the House and to the constituencies the ground which they feel themselves conscientiously and honourably obliged to take, and the course which in every case I believe has been most repugnant to them personally. It is very natural that they should wish almost individually to have that opportunity. Certainly, tidings have reached me from a Gentleman who belongs to that important section of the House, and who has taken some interest in ascertaining the current of these proceedings, that in their opinion down to the present day they have had very limited opportunities indeed of expressing the sentiments that they entertain. Then, Sir, I need not say that the Members termed Nationalists from Ireland have a very considerable title to ask the attention of the House. Under these circumstances, I cannot think it possible that the debate can do otherwise than extend over a large portion—over a considerable number of days beyond the present week.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Ordered, That this day, and on succeeding Tuesdays and Fridays, the Order for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Second Reading of the Government of Ireland Bill, when it is set down among the Orders of the Day, have precedence of Notices of Motions and Orders of the Day.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

——o——

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL.—[BILL 181.]

(*Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Attorney General.*)

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

[FOURTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [10th May], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*The Marquess of Hartington.*)

Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed.*

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): The opposition which this measure has encountered on this side of the House proceeds from two distinct and till lately widely-separated sections of the Liberal Party. The one is led by the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), who has never, I venture to say, in his many speeches on Irish subjects indicated any sign of a willingness to make large concessions to Ireland in the shape of autonomy, who, so far as I understand him, has never shown that he appreciates the justice of their demand, who has never recognized the fact that any benefit would accrue to Ireland from giving her self-government—whose ideas in regard to the local government of Ireland are of a very rudimentary character, who last year strongly opposed the moderate scheme for a National Council propounded by my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), and who this year by going on to the same platform with Members of the Tory Party, without disclaimer of their policy of coercion, appeared, for the moment, to lend the weight of his great authority to that alternative. The other section is led by my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, who has for some time past consistently advocated a policy of large concession to the Irish in the direction of self-government, who admits that his scheme for a National Council is now quite inadequate, but who objects to the Government proposal on the score of its method rather than its principle. Last Friday these two important sections of the Liberal Party met together for the first time at Devonshire House, and arrived at an *entente cordiale* not merely to throw out the Bill if they can, but with respect to the future policy to be offered to Ireland. What that policy is to be the public was not informed. It seems to me that the main body of the Liberals, which lies between those two sections, are entitled to ask and know what is the basis of that agreement, and what is the policy determined on. I do not think the noble Lord is justified in falling back on the old doctrine that he is not to be called on for a policy till he is summoned as a Minister of the Crown. That doctrine sounds very well in the mouth of the Leader of the Opposition; but it does not come well from those who were our allies in the past and who we hope will be our allies in the future. I feel this the more as Lord Salisbury has not been reticent of the policy of the Tory Party. The House is fully acquainted now with that policy. It means a policy of 20 years' coercion. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] I understood from Lord Salisbury that was his view. ["No, no!"] He says—

> "My alternative policy is that the Parliament of England should enable the Government of England to govern Ireland. Apply that recipe honesty, consistently, and resolutely for 20 years, and at the end of that time you find that Ireland will be fit to accept any gifts in the way of local government or the repeal of coercion laws that you may wish to give her."

I think, therefore, I am justified in saying it is intended at the end of 20 years' persistent coercion—[*Cries of* "No, no!"]—at the end of that period some small modicum of local government might be conceded, and that during that period £100,000,000 are to be spent in the emigration of 1,000,000 of the Irish people in preference to a loan of public money to landlords. That policy, it seems to me, comes down from the time of the Plantation of Ulster. I doubt whether a single Member of the Liberal Party will be found to support such a policy. But in view of this declaration of the Tory policy the noble Lord and my right hon. Friend are bound to tell us what their alternative is. Is the agreement a surrender on the part of the noble Lord or of my right hon. Friend? Opinions differ on this point; but we were told yesterday by an organ of the Liberal Press at Birmingham, which is always well informed and probably inspired, that—"It is not Mr. Chamberlain who has changed his opinion, but Lord Hartington who has come round." We have no right to complain of this, we welcome it. I should be the last person to taunt the noble Lord with any change. He has given so many evidences of his sincerity and patriotism that no one can doubt he has good reason for this change. I think it was Mr. Pitt who said that a man who boasts of the consistency of his opinion for 10 years is a slave to the most idle vanity—and in these days, when events move so fast, we may substitute weeks for years. I have no doubt that the noble Lord perceives that the overwhelming majority of the Liberal Party outside the House is in favour of the principles of this Bill and of giving autonomy for Ireland, and differs only to a small degree as to the details; in face of this unanimity the alternative policy of coercion is practically impossible. Change, and great change, in the direction of autonomy is therefore inevitable. If the noble Lord has, in fact, come round it is a most important element in the present position. It must practically mean that the whole of the Liberal Party in this House is now in favour of a wide policy of autonomy for Ireland. That being so, I think it would be most unfortunate—it would be little short of a calamity to the Party, to Ireland, to the country — if some method could not be devised of affirming that great principle before we proceed further to discuss the details, which might be postponed until the country has had a longer time for consideration. In my belief, when once the principle is affirmed or decided by the bulk of the Liberal Party, the settlement of details will become comparatively easy, difficulties which now seem insuperable will disappear, and agreement will be possible. The noble Lord says that the principle of the measure lies in its details. I dispute that. It appears to me that there never was a measure where it was more important to separate the great principle involved from the method of carrying it into effect. There are some points of detail on which I myself have some difficulty in according fully with the Government; but I am strongly in favour of the principle of the Bill. The principle is clear and distinct; it is that of autonomy for Ireland; that Ireland should have the right to legislate for itself, and administer its own separate affairs, but that Imperial matters and common affairs should be reserved for the Imperial Parliament, and should not be dealt with by the Local Legislature. Everything beyond that remains open, I understand. Whether the Irish Members shall continue to sit in that House as now, whether they shall sit on Imperial questions, whether Ulster shall be treated exceptionally in any way, or what the constitution of the new Irish Legislature shall be, are important points for future consideration; but they are subordinate questions for the moment, and may be postponed with advantage. But until the main principle is settled nothing can be done. I desire, therefore, to say a few words on the main principle, and to point out why I think that justice to Ireland and its highest interests require that we should make this concession. My own views as to the necessity for a change in this direction date from four years ago, when in 1882, not for the first time, I visited Ireland, and had the opportunity of seeing something of the administration, and visited also some of the most disturbed districts when the agrarian movement was at its worst. What I saw then and at other times convinced me that some radical change must be made in the administration and in the relations of the two countries. I determined then that I would never accept a position which would make me the instrument of coercion. I re-read Irish history for the last 100 years by the light of what I had seen, and I came to the conclusion that the Act of Union of 1800, in so far as it destroyed all vestige of Irish autonomy, was the main cause of the chronic discontent of Ireland, and had worked untold mischief in its course of legislation and administration. I purposely make a saving clause in alluding to the Act of Union because I think no one can look back at the relations of the Irish Parliament with the British Parliament between 1782 and 1800 and be satisfied with them. The two Legislatures were co-ordinate and co-equal in authority. There was no provision for the dealing with Imperial questions. There was great danger of serious collision between them on Imperial questions. This had been foreseen by Mr. Fox and Mr. Grattan when they agreed to give independence to the Irish Parliament, and it is clear from their speeches and writings that they intended that some agreement should be come to with respect to Imperial affairs. This, unfortunately, was not done, and the difficulties which arose with respect to the Regency Question and to commercial questions were the main arguments used by Mr. Pitt for the Act of Union. It is clear now that the difficulty might have been provided for in some other way than by the suppression of Irish autonomy. Has, then, the Act of Union in this respect been a failure or a success, and has it tended to cement the real union between the two countries? It is impossible to answer this in any other than one way. I will not expend time in alluding to its effect in wounding—I might say outraging—the national sentiment of Ireland, though this is, perhaps, the most important and most enduring of its effects. I should like, however, to quote a few sentences on this point from one of our greatest living historians who has made a profound study of Irish history, but who has lately shown that he is afraid of following out his own historical deductions—I mean Mr. Lecky. Mr. Lecky, writing 15 years years ago on Ireland, said—

> "In no other history can we investigate more fully the evil consequences which must ensue from disregarding that sentiment of nationality which, whether it be wise or foolish, whether it be desirable or the reverse, is at least one of the strongest and most enduring of human passions. This I conceive lies at the root of Irish discontent. It is a question of nationality as truly as in Hungary or in Poland. Special grievances or anomalies may aggravate, but do not cause it, and they become formidable only in so far as they are connected with it."

Never, I venture to think, were truer words written. Unless we appreciate this, unless we are prepared in what we do to appease the national sentiment and to heal the wounds which were inflicted in 1800, we shall not settle the question, and we might as well make no attempt at all. It is this that constitutes the main difference between the measure before us and the treatment recommended by the right hon. Member for Birmingham. It is because my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has touched a chord of sympathy in Ireland, and because this great subject is treated from the point of view of sentiment, that it is likely to be successful; and it is because my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, in the reforms which he has recommended, has not recognized the national sentiment as at the root of discontent in Ireland, that his measures have failed in the past and will, I fear, inevitably fail in the future. The next point I desire to notice is the effect of the suppression of Irish autonomy on the remedial legislation for that country since the Union. The effect of suppressing the self-government of Ireland and relegating all legislation to this Parliament in Westminster has been that Irish questions in ordinary times have been discussed and dealt with from purely English points of view and without regard to Irish traditions or to the views of the majority of the Irish Members or Irish people. The result has been that no remedial measure for Ireland has ever been passed by this Parliament during the 86 years in deference to argument or reason; it has only been when Ireland was a prey to agitation, the scene of outrage, or on the brink of rebellion, that it has been possible for English Ministers to obtain the force sufficient to induce this House to carry reforms for Ireland, and it has then been necessary to appease English opinion by accompanying them with coercive measures to put down the disturbances which had arisen in consequence of the delays in reform, and which alone had made reform possible. There is no exception to be found to this. I defy any hon. Member to point out a single case in which important reforms have been carried for Ireland under any other conditions. I have counted six remedial measures of first-class importance which have been carried during the period I referred to. Catholic Emancipation, the abolition of Church rates, the commutation of tithes, the Disestablishment of the Church, the two Land Acts—they were all treated in the same way, they were all refused to argument or reason, they were denied through long years, and were conceded at last to agitation and outrage and rebellion. The number is sufficient to strike an average; and it may be safely said that 35 or 40 years, as a rule, elapse between the demand of the Irish people and the satisfaction of it; it might be, perhaps, possible to discover how many agrarian outrages and murders are sufficient to rouse English opinion. Let me take, by way of illustration, the first and last of the cases I have referred to. Catholic Emancipation was demanded by Ireland as a whole in 1795. It would have been conceded by the Protestant Parliament of Ireland if Mr. Pitt had not recalled Lord Fitzwilliam and forbidden it. It was not till 1829, when Ireland had passed through years of agitation, when it was on the brink of rebellion, that the Duke of Wellington gave way; and his main motive, as he informed the King, was the fear that there would be a general strike against rent which he was powerless to prevent. But the concession was accompanied by measures which took away all its grace. The 40*s.* freeholders were disfranchised, the Catholic Association, which had been the main cause of the measure being carried, was suppressed, Mr. O'Connell, the leader of the movement, was treated with the greatest indignity, a coercive measure was passed which suspended all the Constitutional liberties of the country; as a result, Ireland was again exasperated, and the Repeal Movement was commenced, which has practically never subsided since, though it has taken many different forms. Let me take the last of the measures, the Land Act. It was the Repeal Movement which first sowed feelings of distrust and hate between landlord and tenant. It soon became necessary to probe the disease. The Devon Commission appointed by Sir Robert Peel in 1842 proved conclusively the justice of the complaints of the Irish tenants, showed the insecurity of their holdings, and the injustice to which they were frequently subjected. In vain, however, were efforts made to introduce moderate reforms. Successive Ministers tried their hands. The House of Lords stopped all legislation. It was not till 1870 and 1881 that it was possible to carry great reforms in the tenure of land in Ireland; and it is as certain as anything can be that neither of those measures would have been passed if it had not been that the landlords of Ireland were deeply alarmed by the agrarian agitation and feared lest they should by resistance lose everything. I could, if time permitted, show how, in a host of minor measures, the same evil genius has prevented justice being done to the demands of Ireland; how they have been delayed, maimed, or ruined, by the action of this Parliament, and chiefly by the action of the House of Lords. It is absolutely certain that if the Irish Legislature had continued to exist, there is not one of those reforms which I have alluded to which would not have been carried 30 years earlier, in deference to the views of the people, expressed in a Constitutional method, rather than as a concession to violence and outrage. It is my belief that no class will have suffered more than the landlords from the suppression of Irish autonomy. Let me now turn to the administration of the country. The administration has been conducted by English statesmen and English permanent officials sent over from this country and responsible to this Parliament, and not to Irish opinion. The administration consists, for the most part, of a gigantic and costly system of police, and of criminal jurisdiction through the stipendiary magistrates. In four out of every five years since 1800 these statesmen have had to administer coercive laws, investing them with arbitrary powers as great or greater than ever the Bourbons had before the French Revolution—power to arrest and imprison on a *lettre de cachet;* power to suppress public meeting; power to suspend trial by jury; power to invade private houses at all hours on mere suspicion, and to search for arms or correspondence. As the only crime in Ireland has been agrarian or political, the system of administration has been identified in the minds of the people with the police, and the police have been regarded as a means of enforcing ejectments, and as the main instruments of a system of land tenure which recent legislation has admitted to be unjust. As a result the administration has been entirely separated from the people, and is as remote from them and from their leaders as if the people were in Fiji. It is impossible for any Englishman who has not seen it to understand the isolation in which the English Ministers and English officials who rule Ireland exist; how remote they are from the people they rule. They are surrounded by the instruments of coercion, for whose misdeeds and mistakes they are responsible in Irish opinion, and whom they often dare not overrule for fear of destroying the only means of governing which they have. I doubt whether any Ministers ever used arbitrary powers more carefully, with greater patience, with greater moral and physical courage, than Lord Spencer and my right hon. Friend the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan); but even under their paternal rule things were done which it was impossible to justify, and which caused the greatest exasperation in Ireland. I conceive that they found it impossible to overrule their subordinates without destroying their authority in face of the tremendous force of the National Party. With the single exception of Lord Melbourne's Government, when there was close alliance with Mr. O'Connell, and when he practically advised and directed the Irish policy, and when Mr. Drummond was Permanent Secretary, there has never been a time in the 86 years since the Union when the Irish administration has been in harmony with Irish opinion. What has been the financial and economic result of this administration? The old system of corruption, by which, before 1800, the English Government endeavoured to maintain its power in Ireland has been continued in another form. The civil administration in Ireland is the most costly and the least effective of any in Europe. No Minister is able to deal with this subject. His life at Dublin would be unendurable if he did. Public opinion in Ireland naturally supports any pull upon the Imperial Exchequer. The police is three time more costly in proportion than the similar force in England and Scotland. Every service is largely in excess of the public requirements. As a result the cost of civil administration is so great that after paying for it out of Irish taxation there remains a balance not sufficient to pay the cost of the Army which supports our system of government there. And it is absolutely certain that Ireland contributes nothing whatever to the Imperial Expenditure, or the maintenance of the Army and Navy which sustains our great Empire, or to the Public Debt; while, on the other hand, it must be admitted that the system of taxation tells heavily on Ireland, and that in proportion to its means Ireland is more heavily taxed than England or Scotland. What a marked contrast there is between Ireland and Scotland. Scotland, with a population of 3,500,000, gives a balance of £5,000,000 after paying for its civil administration, of which a small part only is necessary to maintain the Imperial troops quartered in it. Ireland, with 5,000,000, gives a balance of £2,000,000, which is much less than the cost of maintaining them. Lastly, Sir, let me ask the House to look at the effect of the suppression of Irish autonomy on the social condition of Ireland and the relation of its classes. The effect has been to separate classes in Ireland, to throw the minority there, the landlords and the Protestants, upon English support, to denationalize them, to sectarianize them. Before the Union the Irish Protestants and the Irish landlords were the National Party in Ireland; they headed the movement of the United Irishmen in 1782; they were the most determined opponents to the Union in 1800. It is true that they had a monopoly of political power in the Irish Parliament, but they were quite ready to share it with their Catholic fellow-citizens; they admitted the Catholics to the franchise in 1793; they repealed the penal laws against Catholics; they admitted Catholics to the Professions; they threw open Trinity College to the Catholics 30 years before the English Universities adopted the same course. They founded Maynooth; they would have carried this policy to its legitimate conclusion if Mr. Pitt had permitted them. No human being in those days ever suggested such a calumny on Ireland as that it consisted of two nations. The effect of the Act of Union has been to separate classes more and more; although it is a great exaggeration to speak of Ireland as consisting of two nations, it is true that classes are more separated there now than in almost any part of Europe. It is demonstrable that this is due to the suppression of Irish self-government; and it can only be cured by restoring that self-government. In my opinion, the ills of Ireland can only be cured by reuniting classes, and by compelling them to come to terms under the same Government. I might, if time permitted, glance at the effect of the Union on English institutions and this Parliament; I might show how legislation for England had been postponed for years by the necessity for dealing with Ireland; how Irish questions have been the disturbing elements in English policy, and I make the reservation so far as the autonomy of Ireland is concerned, because, as I have said, I think in looking back to the Irish Parliaments from 1782 to 1800 nobody can admit that her relations to the Imperial Parliament were satisfactory. The two Parliaments in those days were co-ordinate and co-equal, and there was no provision for dealing with Imperial questions. The Irish Parliament had as great a right to deal with Imperial questions at that time as the English Parliament had, and, consequently, there was great danger of collision between the two Legislatures, and, as is well known, there were collisions on important matters, especially in respect of the Regency Bill, and also the enfranchisement of Roman Catholics. But anyone will see who looks at the speeches of Mr. Fox and at the letters of Mr. Grattan that this danger was predicted by those statesmen in 1782, when the independence of the Irish Parliament was admitted, and it was fully intended by them that some agreement should be come to between the two Parliaments in reference to the control of Imperial questions. Unfortunately, no such agreement was come to, and as the result the difficulties I have adverted to did occur, and they formed the principal argument used by Mr. Pitt for bringing about the Union. Looking back, I cannot but think it was a great misfortune that that agreement was not come to, and my belief is that had it been it would not have been necessary, in the view of Mr. Pitt, to bring about the Union, and so to destroy the Irish Legislature. I say, then, that, looking back at the 86 years which have elapsed since the Union, we can come to no other conclusion than that the result has been disastrous from every point of view. It has not caused content between the two countries. In my view it has not really tended to a true union between the two countries; it has not expedited the enactment of remedial measures for Ireland; and, finally, it has had a most unfortunate effect on the relations of classes in Ireland. I understand the object of this measure to be not to repeal the Act of Union, but to reverse its policy in respect of that portion of it which experience has shown to be mischievous in the highest degree to the interests of both countries; to reconstitute an Irish Parliament for the purpose of dealing with purely Irish questions and to control Irish administration, but to do it in such a way as to reserve all Imperial questions and all matters common to the two countries to this Parliament in Westminster. It is said by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James) that this proposal will destroy the supremacy of this Parliament. That is founded on a misconception of the measure. The Imperial Parliament will remain supreme in the same way in which it is now supreme over our Colonial Legislature, which owes its existence to statutory powers; if the 37th clause points out the mode of amending this Act, that is a promise which Parliament will certainly follow, but which will not in strict law be binding, for the same power which passes this law will be able to amend it; it will not be competent for any tribunal to declare any enactment of this Parliament to be *ultra vires* or unconstitutional. On the other hand, if the Irish Parliament exceeds its powers, it will be competent for a Court of Law to determine this question. Again, the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale and my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury object that the effect will be that there may be different laws for England and Ireland. I admit this; but they have different laws already. There can be no greater difference than the laws which relate to the tenure of land in the two countries. The only object of granting autonomy is to give greater opportunity for adapting laws to the wants of different communities; and the Act of Union has failed because we have attempted to centralize and to insist upon the same laws for Ireland as for

England, except where we have been compelled by agitation or outrage to deal exceptionally with Ireland. Again, it is said, are we going to hand over the government of Ireland to men who have shown by their conduct here how little they respect the rights of property or of law and order? The state of the Irish representation the last few years has been the measure of the exasperation of Ireland. Its Members have been sent here as a party of combat, to extract the concession of Home Rule by making English legislation impracticable. To those who take the worst possible view of the Irish Members, I would remind them of the well-known prophecy of Grattan in 1800. He said that Ireland would revenge herself on England for the suppression of its liberties, and the day would come when it would send 100 rebels to the Imperial Parliament to invade our Constitution. I, of course, do not myself wish to apply these words to hon. Members from Ireland. We are not to suppose that the Irish representation will be in the future as it has been in the past. Varied interests will find their expression; it will be impossible for any Leader to dictate to Ireland; new combinations will be formed; the ablest of the men opposite will find careers not now open to them; the sense of a responsibility will be felt by them. The rebels of the Young Ireland Party, who were driven from Ireland by our policy, rose to be able Ministers in our Colonies—like Mr. Gavan Duffy. The rebels in Canada governed Canada when we gave to it an independent Government; and similarly the hon. Members opposite will rise to the occasion presented to them. If we can settle finally the agrarian question, I could predict that Ireland will be profoundly Conservative or very Democratic. Already Mr. Henry George found less support for his views on land ownership in Ireland than in any other part of the United Kingdom. I observed a very able speech directed against him in one of the Irish papers, delivered by the hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar). For my part, I have unbounded confidence in the effect of popular self-government, that Ireland *farà da se* and will administer her own affairs with credit and honour. For my part, I shall be glad to see some scheme by which, without interfering with the main principle of this measure, there could be a certain representation of Irish Members in this House. The subject is a very difficult one. I believe it is better postponed until we have decided the main question. My right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham proposes to retain the Irish Members in their full number; and he does so for the express purpose of enabling this House to exercise full control over the Irish Legislature, and to act as an appeal. The scheme, I venture to think, an impolitic one. It would not work; it would not have the effect the right hon. Member desires. The Irish Members here would always be able to prevent the review of the Irish Legislature. The scheme, however, aims at reducing the Irish Assembly to the position of a mere Council. It is, in fact, a revival of the National Council scheme under another name. My right hon. Friend will, I think, admit that no one gave him a warmer support for his scheme last year than I did. I did so upon the express understanding that it received the support of the Irish Leaders. It seemed to me then, as it seems now, that it is useless to propound any scheme which does not meet with the hearty support of the Irish Leaders and Irish opinion. Unfortunately, when the scheme came to light, it did not meet with the approval of the Irish Party, and it was repudiated by their Leaders. I venture to think that it is not now more practicable than it was last year. I do not know whether my right hon. Friend now sees that the exigencies of the moment require something stronger. I would advert to his scheme of National Councils simply to point out that there were two features in it which are common to the Bill. The first of them is that in a National Council for Ireland the representation was proposed to be of a double character; he proposed that the National Council should consist of two classes of representatives—one of owners of property, and the other of ratepayers. I recollect well my right hon. Friend saying it was an arrangement he could not propose for local government in England; but, having regard to the difficulties of Ireland, he thought it was not altogether unacceptable.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I am sorry to interrupt my right hon. Friend, but he is now speaking of matters which came within his knowledge in the Cabinet.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Like yourself.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: But, unlike myself, he has not received the authority of Her Majesty to disclose them. All I want to say, if I am at liberty to refer to this matter at all, is that the proposals my right hon. Friend describes, so far, at least, as details are concerned, were not my proposals, but were suggested by somebody else.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I should be sorry to infringe the Rule to which my right hon. Friend has alluded; but the proposals which he made were communicated to me not merely in the Cabinet, but by my right hon. Friend outside. They were the subject of numerous conversations; and I do not think my right hon. Friend has been very reticent himself on the subject. In fact, if I recollect rightly, he was the first to announce to the public that proposals of that kind had been made to the late Government.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN: I am very sorry to interrupt my right hon. Friend again; but he was referring, when I first interrupted him, to some proposal for a double representation of property and of persons, and all I wished to say to the House and to him was that that was not my proposal.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I certainly understood it was the proposal of my right hon. Friend; but if I am wrong in that I, of course, withdraw my statement. Certainly a proposal that came before me had that peculiar feature; and all I wish to point out is that the measure now before the House has a proposal in it very similar to that I refer to. Before sitting down there is another question to which I wish to refer —I allude to the question of Ulster. My right hon. Friend proposes that Ulster should be excluded from the operation of the Bill. In my opinion, it would not be possible to suggest a more inexpedient arrangement. I do not know what is intended to be meant by Ulster, whether it is the whole of Ulster or only the more Protestant part of it—namely, Antrim and Down. If my right hon. Friend means the whole, I would point out to him that the majority of the people of Ulster are Catholics; at all events, the two religions are so evenly balanced that it would be difficult to determine which is in the majority. No doubt, in a corner of Ulster—namely, in Antrim, and in a portion of Down, and portions of Derry and Armagh, it would be possible to carve out a district in which the Protestants are in the proportion of three to one to the Catholics. If we are to begin with consideration for minorities, why are we to put a minority of the Catholics under Protestants? For my part, I believe that the Protestants of other parts of Ireland would be very little obliged for a proposal of this kind. In my view, the Protestants of Ulster would be a most important element in the Legislature of Ireland. I believe it would be highly contrary to the interests of the Protestants and of the landlords if the Protestants of Ulster were to be excluded from the Irish Legislature, and were to have a separate one of their own. I can scarcely imagine that any proposal of this kind can be submitted in a practicable form. Lastly, I would observe that many of the objections to this measure, many of the fears which have arisen that it will lead to separation and disintegration of the Empire, have their origin in a want of appreciation of the relative position of Ireland to England, and come down to us from a time when she was relatively far stronger in population, wealth, and resources than she now is. At the time of the Union the population of Ireland was one-half that of England, and its wealth about one-seventh. Its population is now one-seventh that of the United Kingdom, and its wealth is certainly not more than 1-24th, possibly even much less. The difference is enormous. I have already shown that it adds nothing to the strength and resources of the Empire. In fact, Ireland never contributed anything appreciable in taxation to the building up of our great Empire; though she has freely given us the blood of her people. The weight of the Empire has fallen on Great Britain. In the words of Burke, spoken in 1785, when Ireland had her independent Legislature, a measure which had Mr. Burke's hearty approval—

> "It was Great Britain alone that bore the burdens and weight of the Empire; she alone must pour out the river of wealth necessary for the defence of it. Ireland and other parts might empty their little rivers to swell the tide; they might wield their puny tridents; but the great trident must be grasped by England alone, and dearly it cost her to hold it. Independence of legislation had been granted to Ireland; yet no other independence could Great Britain give

> her without reversing the order and decree of nature. Ireland could not be separated from England; she could not exist without her; she must for ever remain under the protection of England, her guardian angel."

If that was true in Burke's time, it is far more true now, when the resources of Great Britain are so infinitely greater in proportion to those of Ireland than they ever were before. We can laugh to scorn any suggestion of separation. The strength and superiority of this country are so great that, in my opinion, we can afford to be generous to Ireland. It is my confident belief it is possible to concede to Ireland all she really requires in the direction of local government without imperilling any of the great interests of this country; and in so doing we shall add much to the real union of the two countries, and we shall secure and increase, rather than diminish, the real strength and force of the Empire.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I do not think it is necessary for me to follow the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down into the details of his speech, for it consisted mainly of a hostile criticism of the evil effects which have followed from the Union between Great Britain and Ireland. And as to the best of my belief there has been no more consistent supporter of the Union for the years he has been in Parliament than the right hon. Gentleman himself, his career and his opinions in the past are the most effective reply that can be given to his speech to-day. The right hon. Gentleman complained that the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) did not divulge the policy he intended to pursue in the event of this Bill being defeated. He asked whether the noble Lord and the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) had come to an agreement; and, if they had, what was the nature of it? That inquiry has been answered already by the noble Lord, and the experience of political and official life of the right hon. Gentleman might teach him that on a question of this supreme importance it would have been most unwise and imprudent on the part of anyone in the position of the noble Lord to formulate a plan without all the official information which would be at his disposal in the event of his being in Office. And, besides, the noble Lord only followed the example which was set him by the Prime Minister two or three months ago, in certain observations he made in the course of the contest in Mid Lothian. The right hon. Gentleman proceeded to give us the advantage of his own view of the alternative policy of Lord Salisbury, and that he described as a policy of 20 years of persistent coercion. Sir, nothing is easier than to take an isolated passage from a speech, and upon that to put almost any interpretation you please. But Lord Salisbury said—

> "My alternative policy is that Parliament should enable the Government of England to govern Ireland honestly, consistently, and resolutely for 20 years."

Then, said the right hon. Gentleman, that of course means coercion. [*Cries of* "Read on!"] That is precisely what I am going to do. What definition does Lord Salisbury give of coercion? He says that it means nothing but forcing Ireland to abstain—from what? From shooting agents and vivisecting animals, and from breaking the law by outrages and violence. Am I to understand that the right hon. Gentleman approves these things? If he does not, I fail to see in what consists the difference between the views of the right hon. Gentleman and those of Lord Salisbury. Now, Sir, I pass to the consideration of the great question which is before us at this moment. The Secretary of State for War, speaking on behalf of the Government the other night, stated that the Bill which is now before us was the most startling political event in the life of any man among us.

The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) (Stirling, &c.): I said the most grave and startling.

Mr. CHAPLIN: The most grave and startling political event in the life of any man among us. I agree in that assertion; I say that it is something more; for most of us still agree, in spite of the definition of the right hon. Gentleman, that it is the most tremendous political experiment that has ever been suggested by an English Minister to Parliament. If that be so, the very first thing we should naturally have expected would be this—that reasons of the gravest and even most overwhelming character would have been offered to us by the Minister for its adoption. But what I find to be chiefly remarkable throughout the whole of these proceedings is this—that from first to last not one solid and substantial reason of this character has been offered to us whatever. Why has this great scheme for the creation of an Irish Parliament been suddenly produced in a manner which all previous declarations of the Prime Minister made it absolutely impossible for anyone to anticipate? I gather, Sir, from the Prime Minister himself that the terrible exigencies of social order in Ireland and the imperative necessity of dealing with that question are in reality the *raison d'être* of these proposals, the very essence of which is the creation of an Irish Parliament. Nothing could be more emphatic than his language on this point.

> "This great change," he said, "is not proposed on grounds of expediency alone, or in the view of abstract improvement alone; it is proposed in order to meet the first necessity of civilized society. Social order is not broken up; it is undermined, it is sapped; and by general and universal consent it imperatively requires to be dealt with."

Those are the Prime Minister's words, and I must say that a most striking confession they afford of the collapse, the folly, and, to use the words of the President of the Local Government Board last night, the demonstrated and disastrous failure of the whole of his own past policy in Ireland. Now, I admit the duty, I acknowledge the necessity, which rests upon the Government of dealing with this question without delay. But what I wish to point out is this—that the right hon. Gentleman has told us absolutely nothing whatever up till now to warrant the belief either that the want of social order can justly be traced to the rule of the Imperial Parliament, or that the establishment of a new and separate Parliament would do anything to restore it. The right hon. Gentleman having told us nothing, we must look, therefore, elsewhere for the information. Have we any grounds for this belief either in the teaching of history or in the experience of the past? No, Sir; we have none; and I maintain, on the other hand, that exactly the opposite is the case. I will quote an authority on this point, who is a favourite authority of the right hon. Gentleman—namely, the authority of Mr. Froude. He quoted Mr. Froude the other night as to the shortcomings of the Irish landlords. I desire to quote him with reference to social order under a separate Parliament in Ireland. What does he say? Writing of 1786 the following is his description:—

> "A country where girls might be ravished, soldiers hamstrung, and statesmen who objected to such proceedings held up as marks for assassins' poignards was unfit for the habitation of human beings."

And then, as if to bring home the accusation, he comes to the capital of the country—to Dublin itself—

> "The House of Commons—that is, the Irish House of Commons—had been half-a-dozen times invaded by the mob; a tarring and feathering committee had maintained a reign of terror for six months; the newspapers openly preached assassination, and an Act of Parliament had been necessary to prevent enthusiastic patriots from slicing the tendons of British soldiers who might happen to be straying in the streets."

That is a cheering prospect certainly for that portion of the Imperial Forces which I understand, if the Bill is carried, is still to be located in Dublin, or in other parts of the country. So much, then, for the question of social order; and if it were necessary or desirable to do so, I could support the authority of Mr. Froude by quotations from other historians, whose accuracy is unimpeached, and which would bear out to the letter every word that he has written on the subject. Are there any other grounds on which the Bill of the Government can be supported? What about the material prosperity of the country? Did the material prosperity of Ireland decline, or did it increase, under a separate Parliament in Ireland? Was it greater, or was it less, before or after the Union? I wish to bring these questions to the test of experience and proof. Fortunately, we have some trustworthy *data* to go upon; and it would not have been difficult for me or anyone to prove that the material prosperity of the country which, during Grattan's Parliament and before the Union upon the whole steadily declined, after the Union and until the Famine steadily increased, and after the Famine and until the recent years of severe agricultural depression continued steadily to do so. But it is not necessary for me, or for anyone to show this, because it has been shown already in the Irish Correspondence laid on the Table of the House, and in the communications presented to the Prime Minister by the Loyal Irish Patriotic Union.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): Oh, oh!

MR. CHAPLIN: Does the hon. Gentleman impugn the accuracy of those statements?

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON: Certainly.

Mr. CHAPLIN: Well, the hon. Member will have an opportunity of speaking in this debate, and of endeavouring to show in what respect they are wrong, which most certainly has not been done at present; they contain a great deal of most interesting and instructive information. They point, in the first place, to the trade and to the commerce of the country as indicated by the exports and imports. They point to the tonnage of ships and shipbuilding, to the consumption of articles of luxury; and in relation to this matter they make a comparison of the position before and after the Union, which shows unmistakably that it was entirely in favour of the Union. Again, they draw attention to the enormous number of Petitions which, during the time of the Irish Parliament, were presented to that Assembly from almost every trade in Ireland complaining of the ruinous depression from which they had begun to suffer; and, at the same time, they pointed to the immense increase in the National Debt during the same period. What is the case after the Union? They show an enormous increase in the savings of the people in the banks, a great increase also in the number of cattle and stock in the country, and a still more marked improvement in the character of the houses and the dwellings of the poor. If the hon. Member who interrupted me is able to contradict the accuracy of these facts, which have been presented in the Irish Correspondence, I hope he will take an early opportunity of doing so before the debate closes. I think it is not too much for me to say that in these circumstances I have every right to believe that there is nothing to be hoped for in the way of gain, and that there is much to be feared in the way of loss, as regards the material prosperity of the country under a Parliament in Ireland which is to be separate from that of England. Sir, I cannot help thinking that the Prime Minister himself must have had the greatest possible difficulty in finding those broad and solid grounds which he himself admitted were absolutely necessary as a justification for his measure; because, when I come to examine those which he did adduce, I am able to find in them absolutely nothing but what I should describe as a purely negative justification of his scheme. As I have shown, social order is the prime motive of the Prime Minister's proposals, and in order to make out his case he proceeded in this way. His argument was to this effect—Agrarian crime has become almost habitual in Ireland, and your repressive legislation has become as habitual as the crime which it is intended to repress. Your coercion in the past has been a spurious and ineffectual coercion; and it is useless to attempt to conceal, either from yourselves or from the world, that it has failed altogether in the accomplishment of its purpose. True it is, there is another kind of coercion, stern, resolute, and consistent, which would succeed in the accomplishment of its purpose; but it is a coercion which neither England nor Scotland will ever consent to for a moment until every other alternative has been tried and been exhausted; and there is one alternative which has not been tried —namely, the alternative which I propose, and that is, to strip your legislation of the foreign aspect and the foreign garb it wears at present. I take issue with the right hon. Gentleman directly upon these points. I deny that coercion has invariably failed in the past, and I say if it has failed it has been owing to the fault of the right hon. Gentleman and his Colleagues, and the uncertain, ever-changing attitude on their part with regard to the exercise and administration of their repressive legislation. Again, I deny that the only alternative to his scheme is coercion of exceptional and additional severity; and if it was, I say that both Scotland and England would prefer it, as the lesser of two evils, to the proposals which they and we believe would sooner or later lead most inevitably either to separation, or to civil war, or to something like the reconquest of Ireland before two years were over. Nothing could be more striking or remarkable than the language of one of the Ministers of the Crown on this point. I heard the Chancellor of the Exchequer make a most amusing speech on the introduction of the measure, and as he came to the close of his speech, and anticipating the inquiry whether he had no misgiving as to the Prime Minister's proposals, he admitted that he had; but he added this—"If by any accident our schemes should fail, remember we are 30,000,000 and they are 5,000,000, and we have all the resources of England at our back." I thought at the time that this was not a particularly hopeful prospect for the schemes of the right hon. Gentleman. If there has been failure in the system, the reason of the failure is not very far to seek. When a Minister begins by re-echoing the parrot cry that "force is no remedy" for murder and outrages in Ireland—when a Colleague declares against "anything which would stifle agitation, for fear it should prevent reform," at the very moment when outrages of every sort and kind were occurring every day in Ireland—why, in his hands repressive legislation is, of course, foredoomed to fail. Again, when the Minister makes use of the coercive powers which at last he has asked for, and tardily obtained, to imprison Irish Members by the score on one day, and to make Kilmainham Treaties with them on the next, why repressive legislation in his hands, of course, becomes a farce. Again, when the lesson of his Irish policy to the Irish Leaders, from its first inception down to the present moment, has been to teach them this—that they were dealing with a man whom they knew they could terrify, frighten, and cajole into anything—[Mr. GLADSTONE: Hear, hear!]—the right hon. Gentleman recognizes the truth of the accusation—why, repressive legislation in his hands fails—naturally and necessarily fails—in the accomplishment of its purpose. I do not want to make unnecessarily offensive observations; but the fact is that it is the right hon. Gentleman himself who has always been the obstacle—the insuperable obstacle—to its success. The whole tenour of his policy for years has been to teach the Irish people--aye, and to teach the world—that there is no surrender, no concession which cannot be extorted from him, if only the pressure be sufficiently severe. The proof of it is in the concession of Home Rule after all the declarations he has made against it in the past—the proof of it is to be found in the very Bills now lying on the Table of this House. If the history of Ireland teaches anything at all, it teaches this—that Irish sedition is only formidable and only dangerous to those who are afraid to grapple with it. That is the reason why it has always played such havoc with the right hon. Gentleman and the successive Governments of which he has been the Chief. Get rid of the right hon. Gentleman, and, in my opinion, one-half of your Irish difficulties will begin to disappear at once. The right hon. Gentleman has taunted my noble Friend with having no plan. But that is the plan—the foundation of any plan and every plan—for dealing successfully with the question; and though I do not wish to give offence, I say that is the teaching of all our experience in the past. Twelve months ago, everyone remembers, we were hampered, oppressed — almost overwhelmed — by foreign difficulties and complications in Egypt, in the Soudan, on the Indian Frontier, and elsewhere, of every sort and kind. And what happened then? Why, the right hon. Gentleman shortly after disappeared from the Treasury Bench, as he has done just now—[Mr. GLADSTONE had the moment before left the House]—and almost as if by magic those foreign difficulties and complications began to subside, and almost all of them gradually and steadily terminated. Everybody remembers this, and knows that it is perfectly true; and you may depend upon it that what happened then in the case of the foreign troubles in which we were involved will happen again in the same degree in regard to our Irish troubles and difficulties. With the permission of the House, I wish to say one word more on coercion. The hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) made an able and striking speech last night. He said—"We are a democracy. A modern democracy is fitted neither by its methods of government nor by its sentiments for any policy of this kind." "A democracy," he said, "loves equality, and it could not bear to think that it was made the means of oppressing the Irish people." Now, I am not enamoured of coercion any more than other pepole; I lament its exercise and I deplore its need; but if by coercion you mean the enforcement of the law, and the granting by Parliament of whatever powers may be necessary to enforce the law in every part of Her Majesty's Dominions, I say we are in the enjoyment of that equality already, and that coercion—although I hold the name itself to be a misnomer altogether—is being practised at this moment in England, in Scotland, in Wales, and in every other civilized community in the world; and I confess I am totally at a loss to discover a reason why Ireland is to be excepted from that general and necessary rule. Moreover, there are two kinds of coercion in Ireland to-day. There is the coercion that is used to enforce and to support, and there is the coercion that is used to frustrate and to thwart the law; there is the lawful coercion of a recognized Government on the one hand, and the lawless coercion of a lawless League upon the other. The hon. Member for Aberdeen said that "a democracy loves freedom." Of course it does. But what kind of freedom does he mean? Freedom to go about one's business, the duties of one's daily life—freedom to fulfil one's legal obligations without injury or molestation, or does he mean freedom to rob, murder, mutilate, and commit every sort of outrage with absolute impunity? I say that to talk this kind of trash about coercion and democracy is the veriest libel upon the common sense and intelligence of the new democracy that ever has proceeded from the mouth of a Member of the House of Commons. Which of these two kinds of coercion, I want to know, most oppresses Ireland at the present time? Is it the coercion of England, or is it not rather the remorseless and despotic domination of a League whose doctrines, in the words of two Ministers, one of whom was on the Treasury Bench not two minutes ago, are the doctrines of treason and assassination? ["No!"] I am quoting the words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. A noble Friend near me reminds me that the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated not very long ago that the National League was "the apostolic succession" of the Land League; and the Prime Minister made use of this observation—"That its edicts were only sanctioned and enforced by the murders which are not denounced." This is the domination, Sir, which has done more injury to Ireland than I can tell—a domination which has disturbed all the relations and has poisoned all the intercourse of society; which has banished capital and confidence, and is destroying every trade; which has rendered freedom of speech, freedom of action, freedom of vote—aye, and even freedom of thought—a thing almost unknown in Ireland to-day, except at the bidding of a priesthood, and except at the bidding of a lawless League. I am not one of those who have ever thought, or who now believe, that the whole Irish population of the South—we know that it is not in the North—is disloyal, or disaffected towards the British Government; nor am I convinced that its true feeling is correctly represented by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway; and I am persuaded that the day is not far distant when the English Government and the English Parliament that shall have the patriotism and the courage to use all those resources of civilization of which the Prime Minister only boasted, and boasted but in vain, to break up this "vile conspiracy," to lift its shackles from the people's necks, and once and for ever destroy its cruel and tyrannical pretensions, will reap their best and highest reward in the gratitude and devotion of a loyal and converted, because they are a liberated, people. So far I have tried to show the fallacy of the arguments which have been adduced in favour of this scheme; and now, if I glance for a moment at those which can be urged against it, I will endeavour, as far as possible, to avoid travelling over ground which has been occupied before. My cardinal objections to the Bill are two. In the first place, you are about to impose obligations on the Government in Ireland with regard to which you have absolutely no power whatsoever to enforce them except, if it be necessary in the last resort, by the arbitrament of war; and if force is to be used at all, I, for one, would infinitely prefer coercion now to anything in the nature of war, or the reconquest of the country, probably some two years hence. My second cardinal objection is this—that if the Bill does not lead directly to separation, undoubtedly it gives to the Separatist Party an enormous ground of vantage, and a powerful lever for effecting separation in future if they desire it. What I want to know is this—how is this lever going to be used? And you must remember that this question is more than ever important at this moment, since we have been made acquainted with the contemplated alterations in the Bill. You are going to have a separate Parliament in Ireland; and now we are told—it is more than whispered—that, under some circumstances, the whole of the Irish Members are to come back to Westminster as well. Now, just conceive what a weapon you are placing in their hands. If 86 Irish Members, within two months of the meeting of a Parliament elected under the new suffrage, have been able to extort from the Prime Minister and the Government of the day the concession of Home Rule, when they stood unaided and alone, what is there in the world that 86 Irish Members, with a whole Parliament in Dublin behind them, will not be able to obtain? They will be able to dictate especially to the right hon. Gentleman's Government their own terms upon any given subject relating to Ireland that they please. What I want to know from hon. Members representing Ireland is whether this measure is to be regarded as a final settlement of this question, or only as an instalment? Do the Irish Members still adhere to, or have they abandoned all idea of, national independence and separation? Can the Prime Minister give us any assurance upon this point; and, what is infinitely more important, is the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) either willing or able to give us any guarantee upon the subject? It is all very well for the Government to point to what they term a change of tone in the speeches of Irish Members; but we have before us the speeches of the hon. Member for Cork, which he has neither explained nor withdrawn. In these circumstances I should wish to put a question to the hon. Member for Cork; but in his absence for the moment I have no doubt that the question will be repeated to him by some of his followers. I could quote scores of speeches to the same effect; but I will only refer to one which was made only last year in London. He had already, in 1883, on the famous occasion of the testimonial of £40,000—presented to him in Dublin—declared the determination of the Irish Party "to bequeath the great birthright"—not of legislative—I beg the Prime Minister to mark the difference, but "of national—independence to those who came after them." And on the 17th of March last year he is reported to have used these words—

> "We can none of us do more than strive for that which may seem attainable to-day; but we ought at the same time to recollect that we should not impede or hamper the march of our nation; that though our programme may be limited and small, it should be such a one as shall not hereafter prevent the fullest realization of the hopes of Ireland."

What is the programme of which he speaks as being so limited and small? Why, I take it to be the scheme which is before us now. What is the meaning of "the fullest realization of the hopes of Ireland hereafter?" Can any human being doubt that they point to that "birthright of national independence," and that severance of the last link between the two countries, of which he had so often spoken before? I therefore wish to ask the hon. Member for Cork whether he adheres to or renounces the opinion and views which he expressed in the Rotunda of Dublin on the occasion to which I refer? If he does, then there may be some grounds for hoping that the sentiment and the tone of Irish Members have undergone a change, such as the right hon. Member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld) so unctuously referred to last night. If he does not, then I do not hesitate to say that the Minister who deliberately places this weapon in the hands of the hon. Member for Cork is guilty of betraying the sacred trust which is reposed in him, of maintaining to the utmost of his power the unity of the Empire which he is bound in duty to protect. Again, I say that, whether they want separation and national independence or not, legislative independence is practically impossible without it, and legislative independence is the very minimum of the Irish demands. Is there any Irish Member present who will contradict that statement? The hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) made a statement upon this point which I wish to notice. He said—

> "We have a right in this Parliament to legislate for Ireland, and we shall have that right left; for when the Bill becomes an Act, we shall retain as a matter of right the power of legislation for Ireland for all purposes whatever."

That statement was received, as hon. Members may very well suppose, with a chilling silence from the Irish Members. I am not at all surprised at that, because the Prime Minister, only a few days before, had said that the Irish Parliament would be practically an independent Parliament. It is quite evident that there is as little unity on the part of the Government with regard to their own Bill as there would be in the Empire if this Bill were to pass. We have heard a good deal lately about Grattan's Parliament. The hon. Member for Aberdeen told us that between 1782 and 1800 we had had two Crowns, two Armies, two Ministries, and that, in fact, Ireland and Great Britain were two distinct countries; while the Prime Minister stated, upon the introduction of the Bill, that Grattan's Parliament was as independent as any Parliament in the wide world. But does not the hon. Member for Aberdeen perceive that it was in consequence of the very circumstances he refers to that the difficulties arose between the two countries which led to union between England and Ireland being established? Unless I am misinformed, the Prime Minister was totally in error in his statement as to Grattan's Parliament; no Bills passed by Grattan's Parliament ever had the force of law until they were returned to Ireland under the Great Seal of England. ["No, no!"] It is a matter of history which is capable of proof. [Mr. SULLIVAN: Not after 1782.] I state it as a fact on which I challenge contradiction; and if the Irish Parliament was, as the Prime Minister had said, as independent as any in the wide world, why was not the Great Seal of Ireland used to certify its Bills instead of the Great Seal of England? But I confront the right hon. Gentleman with an authority not less than his own. In 1834 Sir Robert Peel said this—

> "A separate Parliament you may have; an independent Parliament you cannot have; you never had an independent Parliament; you never can have one consistently with the Sovereignty of the British Crown and the connection with the Island of Great Britain."

Now, if Sir Robert Peel and the hon. Member for Aberdeen are right, what becomes of your Bill?—because one of the three conditions you have named as vital to your Bill is this—that it should present the character of being a final and complete settlement of this question; and it is manifestly impossible that any Bill can be a final and complete settlement of the question which does not even grant the minimum of the Irish demands. Again, there is another most important point, which ought to be made plain. I refer to the Prerogative of the Crown in the exercise of the veto. I fail to understand whether the Prerogative of veto is to be absolutely delegated to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to be exercised by him upon the advice of his Irish Ministers, or whether it is to be exercised as it is at present. In either case I see the gravest possible difficulties before you. I will assume for the moment that it is to be exercised as at present. Well, supposing that you carry your two Irish Bills—a supposition which appears to me to be an unlikely one to be realized—and supposing that next year the second one—the Irish Land Bill—is repealed by the Irish Parliament, there is absolutely nothing in this Bill to prevent it. It does not require a very great stretch of imagination to believe that Addresses would be moved and carried in both Houses of Parliament in England praying her to withhold Her Royal Assent from the Irish measure to repeal the Land Act. What is the position in which you place the Crown. If the Sovereign declines, you bring her into conflict with her English Parliament at once. If she complies, then the English and the Irish Parliaments are at two, and the Sovereign is brought into conflict with the Irish Parliament as well. On the other supposition, that the Prerogative is to be exercised by the Lord Lieutenant under the advice and control of the Irish Ministry alone, you part at once with all control over Irish affairs, and there will be nothing to prevent the repeal of the Land Bill, which you yourselves have told us is inseparable from, and vital to, the success of the measure now before us. I do not wish to trespass too long; but there is just one other matter I should like to mention. The real difficulties of Ireland, after all, are agrarian, and not political; and they are to be found in the circumstances of the country, and in the conditions under which the people live. Land-hunger and the absence of all other industries in Ireland lie at the very root of all your Irish troubles at this moment. I have always thought, for many years, until the mistaken policy of the Prime Minister's two Irish Land Bills placed almost insuperable obstacles in the way, that there was, indeed, a wide field for statesmanship in Ireland, in the development of her material prosperity and the improvement of the condition of her people — the consolidation of wretched little farms, too small to provide a decent livelihood or subsistence; the relief of the congested districts, by the migration as well as the emigration of the people, humanely and properly conducted; and the encouragement of manufactures and other industries which were destroyed by the bitterly unjust and selfish commercial policy of England in former days. This is the direction, Sir, in my view, when you talk of plans and a policy for Ireland, in which 20 years ago a wise and patriotic statesman would have endeavoured to proceed. But for all these things the one essential, above all, is capital and credit; and capital and credit by your Bill you are going to banish from the country. There are many other points upon which I should have wished to dwell; but I feel that I have trespassed far too long already. Of two things I am certain—that every other consideration is merged in the danger which lurks within the four corners of this Bill of promoting the separation of Ireland from England; and that, even if we were to pass this Bill to-morrow, it never can become a final settlement of this question. Will the Prime Minister and his Colleagues never learn wisdom from experience? In 1870 you asked us, by the first of your two Land Bills, "to close and to heal up for ever"—those were your own words—"by a manful effort" this great question, which so much affected the happiness of Ireland. Within a few short years, upon the recommendation of a Commission of your own, it was ignominiously repealed. Again, you were warned in 1881—I remember warning you myself—

> "That the ink would not be dry which made judicial rent the law throughout the land, before a new and more determined agitation would arise from the ashes of the old one against the intolerable injustice of paying any rent at all."—(3 *Hansard* [261] 858).

How many months, Sir, had elapsed before that prediction was literally fulfilled by the issue of the "No Rent" Manifesto to the world? And so I make bold to say again to-day. Keep this Bill unaltered if you will to-morrow, and so surely as the sun fulfils its orbit in the heavens, so surely on the morrow of your measure will the cycle of Irish agitation again begin. On every ground then, Mr. Speaker, that can be drawn, from reason, from experience, from judgment, and a knowledge of the facts, we are bound, alike in duty and in honour, to oppose this Bill. And, acting on this certain and this sure belief, there is no sacrifice, no effort we will spare, to compass the destruction—not for to-day or for to-morrow, but for all time to come—of this ill-omened and unhallowed scheme, conceived in darkness and concealment, hatched in secrecy and brought forth in shame, and which we believe will bring no blessing but a curse to Ireland itself, will constitute a danger and a standing menace to this country, which will sap and will impair, and eventually undermine, the very foundations upon which we have been hitherto content to rest the noblest monument of national and human greatness that the world has ever seen, in the Sovereign Parliament and the Sovereign Empire of our Queen.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said, he really did not know which was the grander—the exordium or the peroration of the right hon. Gentleman. It was, no doubt, exceedingly difficult to say anything new on the subject, which had been discussed in the House and out of the House by speakers on platforms throughout the country. The right hon. Gentleman, however, had succeeded in saying something new, for, commenting on what had been said on this side of the House that this was the most startling proposal ever made by an English Minister, the right hon. Gentleman said he would go further and tell the House it was the most tremendous proposal. [MR. CHAPLIN: I said experiment.] He was sure the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) would thank the right hon. Gentleman for having made clear to the House and the country what the position of the noble Lord was. Though he did his best, the noble Lord himself did not make his position clear; but the right hon. Gentleman had been kind enough to let the cat out of the bag, and told them that his object and that of his Friends was to get rid of the Prime Minister. They knew perfectly well that for many a year right hon. Gentlemen opposite had endeavoured to get rid of the Prime Minister, and the difference between them was that the Liberals did not intend to get rid of the Prime Minister, but to stand by him. Then the right hon. Gentleman fell foul of the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) for stating that a democracy was not fitted for coercion. The right hon. Gentleman had informed them that coercion was simply the enforcement of the law; but, as they understood it on that side of the House, it was the enforcement of the law, not as it was enforced in England, but by exceptional laws with regard to Ireland. He agreed with the hon. Member for Aberdeen that a democracy was not fitted for coercion, because there was no permanent action on the part of a democracy when called to act against a portion of the inhabitants of some other portion of the same Realm. They knew what had occurred during the past Session, how a Coercion Bill was passed in the last Parliament, and they remembered—and he regretted it—how the Gentlemen who then occupied the Treasury Bench, the Liberal Ministry, wished to maintain a portion of that Coercion Bill. What happened? They were turned out of Office upon a surprise vote, and the Representatives of the Conservative Party came into power. They came into power by making a bargain with hon. Members following the lead of the hon. Member for Cork that they would bring in no Coercion Bill. Those who had been twitting the Liberal Ministry because their Coercion Bill was not strong enough, for the sake of acquiring Office made a bargain with the Nationalist Members. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] He defied the denial of that statement. [*A laugh.*] The noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) smiled; but he knew perfectly well how that sort of bargain was made. He did not suppose that the noble Lord, or any Member on the Front Bench, or any Member of the Conservative Party in the House went to the Irish Party and said—"You will vote for us against the Ministry, and we promise not to bring in a Coercion Bill." Not a bit of it; but the idea and the knowledge was brought to the minds of the Irish Members that if they did turn out the Government there would not be a Coercion Bill. And, on the other hand, the idea was conveyed to the heads of the Conservative Party that if they did not bring in any Coercion Bill, not only would hon. Gentlemen vote to turn out the Liberals, but they would vote for them at the General Election; and they did vote for them accordingly. As long as they had Parties in that House ready to make such bargains, it was vain to hope that coercion could ever be made permanent with regard to Ireland. For his part, he was delighted that coercion in Ireland was impossible. The right hon. Gentleman had used a most extraordinary argument against the Bill. He said he desired that the Irish Members should remain in the House; but he said they could obtain any further concessions with regard to Ireland that they desired, and the best proof of that was that if they insisted upon anything they were perfectly certain to obtain it. He would remind the right hon. Gentleman that the Bill, as it stood, did not give representation to hon. Members opposite. He should like some Member of the Conservative Party to state whether his objection to the Bill was that it did not give representation to the Irish Members, or that Irish Members ought not to take part in the Business of the House. If the Bill were not passed hon. Members opposite would be able as before to vote on Imperial as well as local measures. How could it be supposed that they would acquire more power over the councils of the nation when they could come there only for Imperial matters, whereas now they could vote on all subjects? The right hon. Gentleman had asked whether the Bill was to be a final one, and whether Ireland would regard the Bill as final, or whether it would consider it a step to national independence and separation? That question the right hon. Gentleman put to some Minister, and asked for an assurance on the point. But how could any Minister give an assurance—for he knew nothing more than the right hon. Gentleman himself? The Prime Minister has expressed his belief that the Bill would be a final settlement, and he could not say any more. The right hon. Gentleman had further charged the hon. Member for Cork with making a specific statement entirely contrary to the idea of this being a final settlement. Surely the right hon. Gentleman knew that when two countries or two parties were almost in a state of war, one side asked a larger concession than it was ready to accept? A little margin must be allowed in these matters. He had no doubt that amongst the utterances of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) and his Friends could be found exceedingly strong expressions, which he should imagine these hon. Gentlemen would regret. But, supposing they were to apply the same rule to the utterances of the noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill) whom he saw opposite. He was perfectly sure that the noble Lord—who as he grew older ripened—would have the grace frankly to admit that he regretted exceedingly above two-thirds of what he had said. They could not pin men down to every word they had said during years of a great struggle like the present. A treaty of peace and amity supposed that they forgot the previous utterances. The hon. Member for Cork, it appeared to him, had already answered the question of the right hon. Gentleman. That hon. Member, in his place in the House, had said that he considered this Bill, with some minor alterations, would be a final settlement of the great issue which had lasted so long between Ireland and England. Probably every Member of that House had the idea in his mind of some modification in the Bill. He did not think that the hon. Member for Cork should be bound by everything that he had said in the heat of this controversy.

MR. CHAPLIN said, that he asked the hon. Member for Cork whether he was ready to say that he renounced the opinions he expressed on the occasion of the meeting in 1883?

MR. LABOUCHERE asked whether the hon. Gentleman was to get up in that House in sackcloth and ashes and solemnly renounce the opinions he had expressed? The hon. Gentleman had stated that he accepted this Bill as a final settlement—and what more could he do? When he said a final settlement, he did not mean that the Irish Members would be unwise if they sought to make minor alterations; but they were ready to take this as a final settlement of the relations which were to subsist between the two countries. The right hon. Gentleman opposite, and many other Gentlemen, had complained of various details of the Bill. The better a Constitution was on paper the worse it was in practice. That might be laid down as an almost universal rule. It was true. France had had dozens of Constitutions. They had all been beautifully made by very wise heads; but they had, every one, failed, because they had been too neat. In England we had a Constitution which was a mass of anomalies and absurdities, and no one would defend it theoretically if its different arrangements were put down on paper; but, on the whole, we found it a very good Constitution, because it suited us. The mistake we had always made was in imagining that what suited us must also suit Ireland. We had endeavoured to force down the throats of the Irish people our system of law, because we considered that it must be good for them as it was good for us. What was one man's meat was another man's poison. The only statesman of eminence who had recognized that was the Prime Minister, who went to the bottom of the evil and endeavoured to remove by the present Bill the grievance of which Ireland complained. He considered that it was a very able mode of dealing with the matter. It was surprising that a scheme should have been found which was satisfactory to the Irish people, and also to the great mass of the Liberal Party in this country. The hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Leatham) had sneered at the idea of their looking abroad for any parallel case to that of Ireland; but it seemed to him to be the best thing they could do in the circumstances. He would not refer to Hungary, which had often been cited, but to a country which it might seem singular for a Radical to refer to—namely, Russia. In Russia there were, so to speak, two Irelands—Poland and Finland. In Poland every concession had been refused, and they knew what its state was at that moment. In Finland autonomy had been granted, and Finland, so far from being a cause of trouble to Russia, was most loyal to Russia. That seemed to be a pretty clear proof that by giving local autonomous institutions to a small State connected with a larger one they established a bond of affection, instead of a desire for separation. But England very slowly digested a new idea. When it was first rumoured that the Prime Minister intended to bring in a Home Rule Bill they were told that the right hon. Gentleman would not be able to form a Cabinet. For his own part, however, he never doubted that the right hon. Gentleman would be able to form one. He asked whether the feeling of the country was not entirely in favour of Home Rule? Of course, the Conservatives, and some Liberals, were opposed to it; but he thought if they looked to the expression of public opinion they would find that in the main the Liberal portion of the constituencies were, by a vast majority, in favour of Home Rule. Many were opposed to it, no doubt; but the Prime Minister well defined the position when he said that the privileged classes were on one side while the people were on the other. He presumed that Conservative Gentlemen agreed with the Prime Minister, for they said exactly the same thing—they were always telling us that wealth, rank, and intelligence were on their side. When some pitiable Peer, of whose existence scarcely anybody knew, wrote to the papers an announcement of his conversion to Conservative views, it was said that "everybody was coming over." He saw the other day in *The Times*, as a proof of how every man of intelligence and position was opposed to the Prime Minister that Lord Wolseley, Lord Tennyson, and Sir Frederick Leighton were opposed to the Bill. Now, was it likely that they on that side of the House were going to give up their opinions on a political question in deference to the opinion of a soldier, or of a Poet Laureate, or of a President of the Royal Academy? He admitted that there were intelligent gentlemen who were opposed to the Bill; but, on the other hand, there were some exceedingly intelligent persons who were in favour of it. Gentlemen who told them—and Heaven knew how often they had told them—that all the intelligence of the country was opposed to the Bill had a very simple way of proving it. They established as a standard of intelligence opposition to the Bill, and therefore it followed as a necessary consequence that every intelligent man was opposed to it. That was a convenient doctrine; but it was, in his opinion, one of the most impudent that had been laid before the House. In all political matters the presumption was against the upper classes being right. A man of the upper class, perhaps, had more education than an artizan; but his mind was entirely warped by belonging to a privileged class. No doubt the superior classes had the money; but he denied that they had greater intelligence on matters of general politics. Experience showed this to be the fact. If they looked back on all the great questions which had been decided in that House, on which side were the superior classes, and on which side were the artizans and the labouring classes? Who were the opponents of the Bill in that House, and what was their policy? In the first place they had the Conservative coming forward with their *nolumus leges Angliæ mutari*. They learnt from the speech of Lord Salisbury, who had very foolishly broken the silence of his Party, what the alternative policy of the Conservatives was if they were to come into power. Lord Salisbury told them that it was absurd to give free institutions to Ireland any more than to Hottentots, the implication, therefore, being that he put the Irish in the same category with Hottentots. Then they were to have no confidence in Ireland, and they were told that these proposals, however much modified, led them by an appreciable stage nearer separation. According to that there was to be no criticism on the part of the Conservatives as to any question of details. They were told what Lord Salisbury would do. Ireland was to be governed resolutely for 20 years, and then she would be ready for a scheme of local self-government, and a repeal of Coercion Laws. That meant coercion. How could they repeal Coercion Laws if there were none, and none were in existence at the present moment? It was absurd for the Conservatives to deny what the intentions of Lord Salisbury were. When they had come into power they had come down to that House and wanted to stop the discussion on the Address in order to bring in an exceptional Coercion Bill. Lord Salisbury had boldly and plainly said so. But the right hon. Gentleman on the Front Opposition Bench had got up and tried to explain away the meaning of Lord Salisbury's words. They had not the honesty of their own convictions. Lord Salisbury, who, he had always believed, was one of the most honest men of his Party, though he could not agree with his political principles, had stated plainly what his views were, and yet right hon. Gentlemen got up on the Front Opposition Bench and tried to explain away his words. That, however, had not been the only scheme of Lord Salisbury; he had also proposed to emigrate a million or so of the Irish people. He did not think that these men, forced out of their country by unfair coercion, would tend to increase the loyal feeling which now existed in Canada with respect to this country. Then Lord Salisbury had said —"Our policy to-day is the traditional policy of the Conservative Party." That was precisely what it was—and he would ask hon. Gentlemen on that side of the House who were doing their best to bring in a Conservative Government to take to heart the fact that Lord Salisbury did not imagine or say that he was going to pluck the chestnuts out of the fire for any Whig or Radical, and in voting against the Bill they would be voting to give effect to that traditional policy. Why had Lord Salisbury made that speech? Because he had imagined that the Conservative Party were being put aside by Gentlemen on that side of the House—by the Whig-Radical combination. For his own part, he could conceive a certain kind of alliance and community of feeling between the Conservatives and some Whig Gentlemen, and to some extent Lord Salisbury might have supported a Whig Government;

but when the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale had given one hand to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham, who had been accused of being an anarchist, a robber, and a spoliator, then Lord Salisbury had thought that he must explain his position to his own Party, or else that they might be under the impression that the Conservative Party was going to aid and abet in that robber and spoliator coming in and having the destinies of the country in his hands. For his own part, speaking as a Radical, he would not mind if a Government of the privileged classes did come in for a little time; he suspected that the Union would not be the only grievance that would be done away with. Well, there were many Gentlemen on that side of the House who were going to vote against the Bill, though he hoped they would get wiser before the division. But who were their Leaders? There were the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh (Mr Goschen). He had always admired the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale, and for this reason—that, in spite of the disadvantages of his birth, the noble Lord had always been a fair Liberal. He had never considered the noble Lord a Radical, or even a robust Liberal; but they must remember that the noble Lord had refused to vote for the Amendment of Mr. Jesse Collings, and that he had never himself asserted that he was a strong Liberal or a Radical. The other Leader was the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh. Now, would anybody suggest that the right hon. Gentleman was a Liberal? The right hon. Gentleman had not been able to find a single constituency in England to return him. He had to go to Scotland, and get a seat by the aid of the Conservatives of Edinburgh.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): Oh, oh!

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman say that Edinburgh Conservatives did not vote for him?

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD: Not by my advice.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Well, he had some hope of the Conservatives of Edinburgh, if they did not take the right hon. and learned Gentleman's advice. The noble Lord the Member for Rossendale told them that the Bill limited the authority of Parliament. That was simply a truism, not an argument. How could they possibly establish a local domestic Legislature in Ireland without so far limiting the authority of Parliament? But when they were not indulging in truisms these Gentlemen indulged in prognostications, and one of these prognostications was that trade and commerce would disappear in Ireland, and that English capital would also disappear. Now, he would like to know what trade would disappear? The main exports from Ireland were agricultural products, and why should the Irish be such lunatics as to injure their trade in those products? The trade would remain precisely the same as it was. What capital went now from England to Ireland? The only capital that went was in the form of advances on mortgage for the benefit of men who had outrun the constable, and were generally absentees and spent the money in England, whereas the interest went from Ireland to England. Then it was said that the credit of the country would suffer. But the credit of a country depended on whether the Government was good or bad, and the right hon. Member for Edinburgh prognosticated that it would be bad because the upper classes would not join it. But when the upper classes found that the Government was established they would be quick enough to join it; but he confessed if he were an Irishman he would not cry his eyes out if the upper classes did not join the Government. We had had an excess of landlords in this House of Commons, and that was why our Land Laws were a reproach to us in the eyes of Europe. We had an excess of plutocrats. We were now paying £500,000 for the occupation of Egypt, because there were so many money-lenders and their friends in that House. If the Irish lost the presence of landlords and loanmongers, their country would probably soon be in a far better position than was this country now. But to protect the landlords' interests there were the two Orders, who completely obviated the objection of the right hon. Member for Edinburgh. It was absurd to say that the Irish Parliament would be unfit to legislate, when hon. Gentlemen opposite had shown themselves such admirable Parliamentarians in that House. Now, what was the alternative proposed by the Whigs? He had read with great interest the speech of the right hon. Member for Edinburgh, though he skipped some of it because it was rather dull. The right hon. Gentleman prided himself upon being thoroughly a practical man; but his only recommendations were firmness and fairness, and patriotism and principle. Thus the right hon. Gentleman's only alternative was an alliterative jingle. The noble Lord the Member for Rossendale was in despair, and his only hope was that everybody would unite to deal with the question in a proper and legitimate way. We might as well wait for the Millennium. The Prime Minister had rightly said that it was essential to deal with the question in such a way as to satisfy the Irish themselves. Was it to be expected that the noble Lord would ever deal with the question in that spirit? We must either rule with the Irish or over them. But against the Bill were not only the Whigs and Conservatives, there were also some few Radicals. The majority of those who, on the Liberal Benches, were opposed to the Bill, were followers of the noble Lord or of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), and men who occupied a frontier position between the Whigs and the Radicals. They were not, for the most part, opposed to the principle of Home Rule, but disliked some of the details of the Bill. Well, he disliked some of the details, but would vote for the Bill because it established the principle of a domestic Legislature for Ireland. Among the Radical opponents of the Bill the only one of any eminence was his right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham. His right hon. Friend had always been the object of his special admiration. He liked many of his right hon. Friend's ideas. He liked his ideas about ransom, about a progressive Income Tax, and the compulsory taking of land from the landlords to grant it to those who wanted allotments. But he was surprised to find his right hon. Friend acting the part of a Conservative jackal, and leading men into a Whig cave. He admired his right hon. Friend, but he believed that an essential element of friendship was candour. He would, therefore, be candid to his right hon. Friend. His right hon. Friend had great qualities, but these were somewhat marred by their combination, and by what the French called the "defects of qualities." His right hon. Friend had a most magnificent confidence in himself. As was said of Lord Russell, his right hon. Friend would be perfectly willing to command the Channel Fleet at a minute's notice. The intensity of this quality led his right hon. Friend to believe that nothing was good which was not inaugurated by himself. If anything was proposed by anybody else he was convinced that it was not a sound proposal. He insisted upon its being entirely altered to suit him. There were, undoubtedly, many other great men who possessed this quality. Then his right hon. Friend was sometimes very impulsive, and those who were very impulsive should "look before they leap." His right hon. Friend, however, always "leaped before he looked," without knowing where he was likely to land. He objected to anyone disagreeing with him, but said when anyone else had a proposal that "he could not compromise himself by pursuing an erroneous course." If they looked to his former position as regarded Ireland, they found that when a candidate for Sheffield he had been a Home Ruler, and in favour of the principles of Mr. Butt. During the last Parliament, although a Member of the Coercion Government, he (Mr. Labouchere) never saw him taking part in the debates. He had said himself that he was always opposed to coercion. Before the last Parliament he had a plan of Councils which went too far for some, and not far enough for others. The Irish Members, however, would not assent to it, and so it fell to the ground. But he seemed to love his child, and he was very indignant that anyone should resist his "plan" to settle the whole Irish Question. He seemed struck with horror when he heard that the Prime Minister himself had a plan, and appeared to think that the Prime Minister was poaching on his preserves. His right hon. Friend always reminded him of Moses coming down from Mount Sinai—the House would remember—when he broke the Tables of Stone. He was just as amazed at anyone not accepting his inspired plan as Moses would have been had an Israelite suggested an amendment in the Ten Commandments. He presumed he went into the Cabinet because he was a man of a certain amount of firmness, and he had an idea of being able to convert his Colleagues, who would allow him to settle the whole question. Well, they did not. Then followed his resignation, and then there was another child. Then he insisted on his resignation at once when he saw the Prime Minister's Bill. Then he was very indignant, and after he left the Cabinet modifications were made in the Bill. Why did he not remain there and discuss it? He seemed to think that any other modifications than his own were a species of monstrosity. But he stuck to his second child, gave up the Councils, and took to federation, which was a most extraordinary scheme. According to this scheme the Irish Question was to wait until the Canadians, New Zealanders, and all were asked to join in a scheme of federation. What was his view with regard to Ulster? It was difficult to understand it, for he seemed to be carrying on a sort of flirtation with the Orangemen. He had increased race prejudice and sectarian animosities, which had been the curse of Ireland, and he came within the right hon. and learned Member for Bury's (Sir Henry James's) description of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill)—he was half a traitor. What was this Protestant Ulster? The whole thing was a sort of fraud as concerned this Parliament. If they excepted Belfast Ulster was not Protestant, and even including Belfast the majority of Protestants did not amount to more than 10,000. Even the Presbyterians of that Province did not wish to be separated from the rest of Ireland. Ulster returned a majority of Nationalist Members. The Representatives of the Orangemen seemed to consider themselves exponents of the whole of Ulster. But there were only about 60,000 Orangemen in Ulster, and they were mainly congregated in towns. Now, these men were, as far as he could understand, steady, sensible, practical men, law-abiding men; but once a year they were seized with a sort of erotic season. About the commencement of July to the 15th it was dangerous for a Catholic to come in their way. This was called the celebrating of the Boyne. After the 15th they became once more perfectly reasoning human beings. The religion of these Orangemen, however, was the most intolerant religion in the whole world; and in regard to their loyalty the Report of Mr. Hume's Committee showed that these exceedingly loyal men came to the conclusion that Her present Majesty was not sufficient for them, and that they wished to place the destinies of the country in the hands of that most disreputable human being, the Duke of Cumberland. Their principal Representative in that House was the hon. Member for Ballykilbeg. If they judged the intelligence, or the loyalty, or the patriotism of these Orangemen by their chosen Representative they should have an exceedingly poor opinion of them. They were threatening at present to wage war against the British Empire. He believed more arrant humbug did not exist. Did anybody suppose that if this swagger and these boasts were not simply a game of brag that these people would put advertisements in the papers asking for 20,000 Snider rifles, and for men to drill them? That was not what men did. But they might believe what they liked about what these people were doing, whether it were drilling or whether it were not. For his part, he believed exceedingly little of it. In the *St. James's Chronicle* he found something to the following effect from Ulster:—

> It is stated that 300 London Volunteers and 100 officers are going to give up their occupations, and without pay are determined to come over as soon as possible to join the Orangemen."

Could there be greater stuff? They were told that Lord Wolseley was going over. But he was going to do nothing of the kind. These unfortunate men were buoyed up by these cock-and-bull stories. Would their Representatives think the House would be such idiots as to believe these absurd statements? But it was the same sort of swagger and boast that prevailed when the right hon. Gentleman introduced his Bill for the Disestablishment of the Irish Church. The Orangemen were then going to resist—they were in arms. Did any single man fight? Not one. They accepted what they considered the destruction of the Church of the country like lambs. He would ask his right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham whether he was going to propose the separation of all Ulster, or only part of it? In parts there was a Catholic majority; in parts the population was mixed. If the right hon. Gentleman was going to apply his proposal to the whole of Ulster, could anything more atrocious be conceived than a large Catholic Body being subject to the rule of such gentlemen as the Orange Body sent over here? As a matter of fact, the Catholics of Ireland were far less intolerant than the Orangemen. The Leader of the Party was a Protestant; the National movement had done away with all species of religious intolerance. He admitted that there was a good deal in favour of the Irish Representatives remaining at Westminster. Although hon. Gentlemen opposite, he believed, were acting in perfect good faith, he very much doubted whether their successors or the Irish nation would for a long time frankly and fairly assent to their exclusion from the Imperial Parliament. But to a very great extent that had already been conceded by the Prime Minister; and, as the right hon. Gentleman had stated, he had no fundamental objection to the Irish Members being at Westminster to discuss Imperial matters. There was reason to hope he would be able to elaborate some such scheme. The right hon. Gentleman had a perfect right to say to the right hon. Member for West Birmingham—"Tell me your plan;" and he hoped that before this debate was over they would have the plan. A heavy responsibility would lie upon hon. Members on that side who were in favour of the principle of the Bill, and who voted against it. The issue was entirely with them, and he asked them seriously to consider whether they would not be doing more harm than good to the Radical cause, and whether they would not be aiding and abetting the Conservatives, by voting against this Bill? They were going admittedly against the wishes of those who sent them there. [*Cries of* "No!" *and* "Yes!"] Let any Gentleman in the House who thought that his Liberal constituents were with him go boldly down and meet them. Even the National Federation, the creation of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, had, by an immense majority, voted for the Bill. Suppose the Bill were defeated; what would be the effect of the Dissolution? Those Gentlemen knew they would not get in again by the Liberal vote; they would have to appeal to the Tory vote. It was a scandal to the Liberal Party. Could anyone imagine anyone occupying a more contemptible position than a Gentleman sitting on the Liberal side, and yet having been sent there by Conservatives? He must either be untrue to his own Party, or untrue to those who elected him. He did not believe, however, the arrangements with the Tories would hold water. In regard to one or two of the chief Liberal seceders it would; but in most cases some wicked local Conservative would insist on standing, and they would lose the pleasure of the presence in that House of the small fry of the Cave. Now, *The Times* had started almost a crusade against the Bill, and from *The Times'* point of view *The Times* was perfectly right. *The Times* wrote some time ago, in regard to this Bill—"Mr. Gladstone's plan is invented for personal ends for a personal crisis." In entertaining such views of the Prime Minister and such views of this plan *The Times* was right to oppose the Bill. *The Times* was wild with elation at the meeting held at Devonshire House, when the right hon. Member for West Birmingham joined the Whig Party. *The Times* said that in the Commons there were six men—Lord Hartington, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Goschen, Mr. Trevelyan, Sir Henry James, and Mr. Courtney—who would compare favourably in point of ability and experience with any six men who might be selected out of the present Cabinet. Very likely. And in the Lords *The Times* said there were four or five Peers of Cabinet rank available for a Union Ministry, including Lord Selborne and the Duke of Argyll. Only fancy the right hon. Member for West Birmingham and the Duke of Argyll in the same Cabinet! *The Times* added that the minor administrative posts could be readily filled up. That meant that if Members were faithful to the Devonshire House alliance, a good many of them would be provided for on the Treasury Bench. Any doubts there might be of the continuance of the Hartington Cabinet were to disappear when once they became dispensers of patronage. What a contemptible thing. Some would be in the Cabinet; some would find little places on the Treasury Bench; in other words, if Members conducted themselves well, they would be paid for it. But would such a marvellous Cabinet be likely to last for very long? It was stated that the right hon. Member for West Birmingham had said there was substantial agreement between him and the noble Marquess as to the policy to be pursued; but that seemed to be denied. It appeared to be a substantial agreement to turn out the present Government, and to wait for circumstances to turn up to their advantage. If they had a plan, why did not they say so? At present they appeared to differ as widely as did the Prime Minister and Lord Salisbury. He believed in the honesty of these seceders; some were conscientiously opposed to the principle of the Bill, and some to details. The latter, at least, ought to consider whether it was not possible to come to some arrangement before they voted against the Bill. The Members of a Party ought not to wash their dirty linen in public, but ought to come to some agreement, as they had done hundreds of times before. If these Gentlemen would consider their position and the great services of the Prime Minister to the country and to the House, they would see that they owed it to themselves, to their constituents, to their Party, and to the Prime Minister to exhaust every means of coming to an understanding before destroying the Government, depriving the Prime Minister of power. He suggested that the Bill should be read a second time, and then withdrawn. ["No, no!"] He did not think hon. Gentlemen opposite would accuse him of being desirous that the Bill should be withdrawn; but what he was anxious to secure was the passing of the measure, and if it were found that they were unable to do that in consequence of the obstinacy or prejudice of a certain number of Gentlemen who were fully prepared to accept the principle of the Bill, and yet vote against it, he said the Irish Party gained more by accepting that arrangement. Irish Members would do well, as a matter of strategy, to acquiesce in that arrangement, because the defeat of the Bill meant a Dissolution, and no one could say at the present moment what would be the decision of the constituencies. On two occasions confident anticipations had been falsified. He should like to carry the second reading of the Bill as the recognition of the principle of a domestic Legislature for Ireland. Every day the country was more and more realizing the fact that Ireland must have a domestic Legislature. If through Liberal dissensions the Conservatives came in, they would have an instalment of Lord Salisbury's 20 years of traditional Tory policy. No doubt the Home Rule Members would do their best to resist that, and they would be assisted; but still, a bird in the hand was worth any number of birds in the bush. The Bill could be passed as a recognition of its main principle, and it would be infinitely the best to pass it as a Resolution. It was all very to fight it out; but they might be beaten. For his own part, speaking honestly, he believed the course he recommended would be the best for Ireland and for the country. But if there were a Dissolution, he believed the country, when it realized that the only alternative was Lord Salisbury's traditional policy of the Tory Party, would declare for the Bill, which carried out the traditional policy of the Liberal Party.

THE LORD MAYOR OF DUBLIN (Mr. T. D. SULLIVAN) (Dublin, College Green) said, he had noticed from the opening of that debate that a great appeal had been made to hon. Members not to treat the subject before the House as a Party question. He had also noticed that the appeal came chiefly from the Tory Members of the House, and he believed in so saying that they were all the time simply playing their own Tory game. As soon as it was thought that all the birds that could be snared were snared the piping of that tune came to an end. As soon as it was thought that all the birds had been gathered into the net, the Head of the Tory Party announced to those little birds that there was no grain for them, and that the spoils of Office in the good time coming would not be for them, but for the Tory Party. He wondered what the seceders from the Liberal Party thought when they heard that announcement. He had no doubt it gave some of them a very bad quarter of an hour indeed. He wished that this question should be considered not only irrespective of Party considerations, but also of personal considerations, irrespective of personal spite, jealousy, spleen, or ambition; but he did not think that the question had been so treated in the House. With reference to the speech of Lord Salisbury, he thought that the noble Lord had spoken a little too soon. The noble Lord proposed an alternative plan to that which was before the House. They had heard in the earlier stages of the debate about a judicious mixture. They always understood that the so-called "judicious mixture" was a mixture of sweet and bitter—a mixture of concession and coercion; but the judicious mixture of Lord Salisbury was entirely different. It was a mixture of coercion and emigration; it was all bitter and no sweet. It was a judicious mixture of Kilmainham and Manitoba. The noble Lord justified all that by saying that he had no confidence in the good faith of the Irish Members, or the good faith of the Irish people. He wished to remind him and the House of Commons of an historical fact for which no Member of that House to-day was personally responsible—namely, that in all the arrangements and the Treaties made between Ireland and England, Ireland kept faith and England broke it. It was English Kings, English Princes, and English Parliaments that broke faith with the Irish nation, and not the Irish nation that broke faith with them. In the time of Charles I. the Irish people were harried, persecuted, and robbed by the Government of England for the profit of that Monarch. Negotiations were entered into by the Irish Parliament whereby, on consideration of their paying into the coffers of the King £120,000 within three years, they would get what were called certain graces. The Irish Parliament paid the first instalment of the money, and the English King put the money into his pocket and refused the graces. Who broke faith, he should like to ask, in this case? Then, again, with regard to the Treaty of Limerick. This was a Treaty made at the close of a long war which had been stiffly fought out on both sides. This Treaty guaranteed, among other things, freedom of worship for the Irish Catholics; and if it had been kept the great trouble which followed would not have occurred, and the long enmity which was bred thereby would never have come into existence. The ink on the Treaty was scarcely dry when it was violated by the King and the Parliament of England; and subsequent to that the Irish people suffered from a horrible and dreary series of penal laws and confiscations. The Treaty had hardly been concluded when into the mouth of the Shannon came reinforcements from France, which would have enabled the Irish Leaders to carry on the war, if they had been base enough to break the Treaty which they had signed. Then, the Act of Union was a violation of the solemn Treaty, entered into between the two Parliaments, whereby it was stated that the independence of the Irish Parliament was settled and ascertained for ever, and was at no time to be questioned. Then, again, one of the understandings connected with the Act of Union was that Catholic Emancipation was immediately to follow it. Catholic Emancipation was withheld for 29 years, which might seem a brief period in the history of ages; but 29 years of oppression, suffering, and persecution was a long period for those who had to endure it. He claimed, therefore, that the Irish were faith-keepers, and the taunt could not be thrown in their face that they were faith-breakers, least of all by an English Nobleman. The whole history of Ireland showed that it was Ireland kept its bargains, and that it was England that broke them. Lord Salisbury said that the Irish Representatives would not only say anything, but that they would swear anything. He charged them, not only with being liars and perjurers, but with sympathizing with all those criminal and evil doings which had occurred in their unfortunate country. But if they were such a class of men as that, why were they to be retained at Westminster for the protection of Imperial interests? They were charged with being the implacable enemies of the Empire, the irreconcilable enemies of England. If that were so, here it was, with their hands upon the springs of Imperial power, that they could, if such was their desire, on many and important and critical questions, do injury to the interests of this country and of the Empire. But were they, after all, irreconcilable enemies of England and of the British Empire? There had been, no doubt, among the Irish people hatred of British power, disaffection, disloyalty —if they would—rebellion. But he would ask hon. Members, now that they had come to give more attention than ever before to Irish history and Irish affairs, whether they were surprised that such a state of things had existed? Did they gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles? Out of oppression could they have love, affection, loyalty, devotion? Give the Irish reason to be loyal. Aye, give them even a fair excuse for being loyal. It would be hoping against hope that there could be an enthusiastic feeling of loyalty in Ireland until the arrangements between the two countries were so constituted that the Irish people could, with honour to themselves, turn their hearts to the country with which they were connected, and the institutions under which they were to live. He denied that the Irish people were implacable haters of England and of English institutions, and in saying so he was only using language which had been used over and over again by the most trusted Irish Leaders, by men who enjoyed the confidence of the Irish people, and who had suffered for the Irish cause. John Martin, who was concerned in the '48 movement, who was transported to Australia, and lived there for some years in exile, but who was afterwards Member for the county of Meath, and who had enjoyed the affection and admiration of all who knew his personal character, used these words—

> "Clearly it is quite possible for Irishmen to live happily, prosperously, and honourably under the English Crown, and in connection with the English nation. Witness Canada, Australia, and the Colonies generally. The only condition required is self-government and Constitutional freedom. With Home Rule, and the National and Constitutional freedom which Home Rule would bestow on us, we might live for ages in friendly connection with our British neighbours, giving and receiving benefits from the connection."

These words were true at that time; they were true to-day; and to the same effect spoke Daniel O'Connell, Isaac Butt, and every other Leader of the Irish people each in his own time. He (Mr. T. D. Sullivan) sincerely believed that under such a measure as was proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister the mass of the Irish people would be content; that ill-feeling against this country would abate; and that good feeling would grow up. They were told that that was a measure almost of separation, and that it would inevitably lead to separation; but those who said so failed to explain how, and he challenged any man to show how it could be done. He wished to know how separation was to be brought about between England and Ireland? Under the conditions of the Bill Ireland was to have no Army, no Navy; Customs and Excise were to be in the hands of the English Parliament; and he would have supposed that with such a state of things separation would be impossible, especially if the "Loyal minority" were to remain, though by that time they would probably have in Ireland a Loyal majority. If they desired, therefore, to have separation, they would have to face the Loyal Party, backed by the whole power of the British Empire. How was it to be done? Lord Bramwell, in a letter to *The Times* the other day, implied that that was a separatist measure, and one that would lead to separation; then by a hop, skip, and jump he went on to say—"Suppose separation effected, England would have a hostile State by its side." Well, they might, of course, suppose anything they liked; they might suppose that the cow jumped over the moon; but they could not reasonably suppose any such thing as a separation being effected under the terms and arrangements of that Bill. Moreover, the Loyal minority must have very little faith in their own virtue of constancy, because for Ireland to make the slightest progress towards separation it would be necessary that she should have a united people; and were the Loyalists all going to turn disloyal? But it was said that in the eyes of foreign nations the unity of the Empire would be impaired and its strength diminished by the passing of that measure. Well, what a spectacle to foreign nations was presented by the events of the last 86 years, during which these three United Kingdoms, as they were called, had been almost at each other's throats. They were told that at present a law which was not the law of the Parliament of the United Kingdom was more respected and obeyed than the law made by that authority. What a charming evidence that was to foreign nations of the unity of the Empire! The world could see not only that the Irish people were not united in heart and feeling with the Government of England, not only that the Representatives of Ireland were returned to the House for the one purpose of working out the liberation of their own country, but that all over the habitable globe the Irish race were in sympathy with the aspirations of their kindred at home, and contributed generously towards sustaining the Nationalist movement and carrying it to a successful issue. Again, it was alleged that the Protestant minority could not be left to what were called the tender mercies of their Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen, on account of the religious bigotry and intolerance of the latter. That was a base, a cruel, and an ungrateful calumny upon the Irish people, for there was not in the whole world a people with less taste for religious persecution than the Catholic people of Ireland. He could quote from a speech of the late Mr. John Martin, to whom he had already referred, and who was himself a Protestant Nationalist, in which he said that in his long political life he

> "had never read a word written, or heard a word spoken, by any of the Irish Nationalists intimating a purpose to deprive persons of English descent or persons of any religion prevailing in England of their property or of equal rights as Irish citizens. In a self-governing country, and in the times in which we live, there was neither the inclination nor practically the power in any sect to wrong and persecute."

It was amazing to hear addresses by hon. Members from the North of Ireland expressing at one time these foolish fears and terrors and at the next moment a lot of ridiculous braggadocio. In an Irish Parliament the Protestants would have their share, and more than their share, of influence, place, and power; and it was only natural and a matter of plain policy, to say nothing of principle, that the Catholics should desire their Protestant countrymen to take their fair position in an Irish Parliament. Why, then, should these chimerical visions of persecution, oppression, and robbery be conjured up against them? Mr. Isaac Butt had also characterized the apprehensions of danger to Protestant liberty from an Irish Parliament as not only absurd, but as unworthy of men who were strong enough to protect themselves with their own right arms against oppression. Mr. O'Connell declared that he would rather take an Irish Protestant Parliament back again, and take the penal laws with them, than have Ireland without a native Parliament. That was no chance expression of O'Connell's, but one deliberately made and published. When there was a Protestant Parliament in Ireland it protected Irish rights, fostered Irish industry, developed Irish trade and commerce, and its liberalizing spirit was increasing every day. O'Connell presented a Petition with the signatures of 80,000 Roman Catholics in favour of the removal of the Dissenters' disabilities, and he had worked hard in this cause. On one occasion, before the Dublin Corporation, he said—

> "This hand drew up a Petition in favour of the freedom of Protestant Dissenters in England. It was twice approved of by the private committee of the Roman Catholic Association, twice by the Association itself. It was afterwards carried unanimously at an aggregate meeting of Catholics in Clarendon Street chapel, where its adoption was proposed by a Carmelite friar. It was presented to Parliament with several thousand signatures, and within a few weeks after its presentation they were liberated."

Let the Protestant Dissenters of England not forget that O'Connell took an effective part in securing their liberation. He would also point out that when the Irish Protestant Church was disestablished there was not a single demonstration of triumph in Ireland that could be offensive to the ascendancy class, which then got its knock-down blow. There was no jeer or insult or vaunting over those who had thus been defeated. Nothing was done that could give offence to the Protestants. Were those the signs of an intolerant people? On the contrary, they were the signs of a fair-minded and kindly people who strove hard for justice, who did not want for themselves any ascendancy over their Protestant fellow-countrymen, but who desired to form with them a united and prosperous Irish nation. It was said that Ulster would not have this measure; but the word "Ulster" was being used most fraudulently by many persons. Under cover of this word it was attempted to convey the false impression to the English mind that the people of Ulster were practically all Protestants and Anti-Nationalists; but in five of the nine counties of Ulster the Roman Catholics preponderated, and Ulster, as a whole, had returned a majority of Nationalist Members to the present Parliament. If hon. Members looked into this point they would perceive the imposture of talking as if Ulster was united in opposition to Home Rule. It was said that "Ulster would arm" and resist. The Orangemen of Ulster said so themselves; but exactly the same sort of trash was talked by them when it was proposed to disestablish the Irish Church. He would verify this fact with a few quotations. At a meeting held in the Chapter Room of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, on the 31st of March, 1869, the senior Member for Dublin University (Mr. Plunket) said—

> "We will appeal to our brother Protestants in England and Scotland and Wales in this last awful hour of our fortunes. We will call upon them not to allow these provisions to be made law to hamper our organization."

Now they must look for the thunder—

> "And not to drive us again to that old kind of material and physical resistance which accompanied the first protesting of our forefathers three centuries ago, which accompanied the second protest in this Kingdom by our forefathers 200 years ago, which accompanied the glorious struggle for liberty and Protestantism of our predecessors, and was a protest in act and word which they were willing to seal with their blood in martyrdom and battle, if need be, to protest against the oppression and the slavery of a system which they could not, and should not, and which their descendants never will, submit to."

He was glad to see that the hon. Member, the "last awful hour" of whose fortunes had come many years ago, nothing the worse for it, but still smiling and radiant. At another demonstration on June 17, 1869, in Tyrone, the chairman of the meeting, a D.G.M. of the Orange Lodge—for all Orangemen were either grand or demi-grand—said that—

> "They would be all ready at the roll of the drum to strike a blow for their country with their Minie rifles, as were their fathers before them."

Then, as now, they talked a great deal about the battle of the Boyne, and about arming themselves for another battle of the kind. Their talk about the battle of the Boyne was as great a fraud as their talk about Ulster. They take the whole credit of it to themselves. Why, the Irish Protestants at the battle of the Boyne formed only one-eighth of King William's Army, and as an Irishman he was almost ashamed to say that they were the least effective portion of it. Those terrible people, who were ready to fight the battle of the Boyne over and over again, were descendants of the only portion of William's Army which was routed; they were routed by the Irish Horse, and it required King William himself to rally them. The strength of King William's Army lay in the seasoned and trained troops that he had gathered from every part of Europe, and in the fact that it had a brilliant general at its head. The House would thus see that hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway took honours that did not belong to them. Then, how had the loyalty of the Ulster Orangemen been displayed? When there was a talk of disestablishing the Irish Church there was a threat that 20,000 Ulster Orangemen would hold a meeting in Hyde Park, and the only difficulty they were told in the matter was the fact that the Great Northern Railway could not find transport for them. A Protestant clergyman on the 26th of July, 1861, in a letter to *The Daily Express*, Dublin, recommended a deputation of the "rank, wealth, and intelligence," of Ireland to proceed to London, walking on foot through the streets, and demand admittance to the Queen's Palace in order to impress upon Her Majesty that in assenting to any measure for carrying out that proposal she would be violating her Coronation Oath—thus making out that Her Majesty would be a perjurer if she ratified an Act of Parliament. This was the language which was held by the Loyal minority of Ulster. But that was not enough to show their loyalty. This Loyal minority threatened to invade the House of Commons. He gathered from what occurred that some of their orators did not receive as patient a hearing in that House as they wished, or as the Orange Party in Ireland thought they ought to receive. The present Members of the Irish Party were not in the House then, so they could not be held responsible for what occurred at that time. The way the Ulster Representatives were treated in that House gave rise to great resentment over the way, and one of their spokesmen—the Rev. Leslie Carter—thus referred to the House of Commons—

> "The Orangemen will not allow Gladstone and his crew to trample down the Protestants. They would appeal to the House of Commons to listen to the voice of Ulster. Only a Channel rolled between them."

What a fortunate escape for the British House of Commons that the Channel did roll between them and those desperate men! Their spokesman continued that—

> "The Protestants of the North would march to the House of Commons, and compel their enemies to be silent whilst their Representatives were speaking."

He supposed that it would come to that by-and-bye. One of the orators of the North on this subject actually blossomed into verse. Here are some of the lines —he knew not whence they came—this orator had used—

"Our bosoms we'll bare to the glowing strife,
 Our vows are recorded on high,
To prevail in the cause that is dearer than life,
 Or crushed in its ruins to die."

At the time of the Disestablishment of the Irish Church even harder things were said of the Prime Minister than were said of him now. For example, one reverend gentleman called him nothing less than

Maher-shalal-hash-baz. And when called upon to give the meaning of the appellation, he referred his interrogators to Isaiah, chapter 8. But a very belligerent spirit was evinced in that House at the present time by Representatives who were not ashamed to incite to civil strife. One of these Representatives always reminded him (Mr. T. D. Sullivan), when he rose to speak, of the Scriptural description of the war-horse. He referred to the Representative of North Armagh (Major Saunderson). "His neck is clothed with thunder, the glare of his nostrils is terrible, and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains and the shoutings." He thought some excuse might be urged for some of the Orangemen who used the language to which they were now accustomed — men who were brought up in an atmosphere of suspicion and hate of their Catholic fellow-countrymen. He was amazed at the extent to which their minds dwelt upon the history of the past of strife and bloodshed. He was sure that, as far as one of those hon. Members was concerned, his dreams at night were of King William; that he imagined himself mounted on a great white horse, with his sword in hand, charging by the side of King William at the battle of the Boyne, smiting the unfortunate Papists hip and thigh. But, whatever excuse could be made for such silly speeches as they had heard from some of the Ulster Members, there were many men in this country, and in this Parliament, aiding and abetting that evil work, who had not the same excuse. No such excuse could be offered on behalf of the lively right hon. Gentleman (Lord Randolph Churchill), who, only a few weeks ago, was doing his best to educate the Tory Party up to Home Rule, but who, with the agility of a squirrel, had hopped off that branch of the tree on to another. Nor could any such excuse be urged for a cold-blooded and calculating English politician (Mr. J. Chamberlain), whom nobody suspected of being moved by religious passion, and who, though deeply committed to the principle of Home Rule, had not scrupled to give encouragement to the men who were doing their best to re-kindle the baneful fires of religious animosity in Ireland. But after all that was said and written, it was certain that the majority of hon. Members of that House agreed in the belief that something must be done for Ireland, and that the present order, or rather disorder, of things should no longer be allowed to continue. That being the general feeling, why not, he would say, in the words of the late Lord Beaconsfield, "do the thing handsomely?" Let them pass a large and generous measure which would win the hearts of the Irish people, remembering that if they should fail to win those hearts any measures which they might pass in London for the better government of Ireland would be of small avail. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) some time ago said, with reference to his scheme for National Councils—

> "The notion was a very good notion. . . . But it has, at the present moment, one fatal defect—if hon. Members opposite (referring to the Home Rule Members) were at any time disposed to give it their consideration they are no longer willing to do so; they reject it; and, under those circumstances, Heaven forefend that any English Party or statesman should attempt to impose that benefit upon them."—(3 *Hansard*, [304] 1203.)

If that was a good reason for abandoning the idea of National Councils, was it not an equally good reason for abandoning the newer project that the right hon. Gentleman had brought forward? This more recent idea of his had the same fatal defect; it was not accepted by the Irish Members, and would not be accepted by the Irish people. The measure of the Prime Minister, on the other hand, had the crowning merit of being regarded as satisfactory by the Irish race throughout the world. If that were so, he would ask hon. Members why discard it? It would not injure them, and would satisfy the Irish people. It would give peace, happiness, and quiet to Ireland. Why, therefore, could they not vote for a measure fraught with such happy promise? England had done many things of which her sons were proud. She had won victories by sea and land; but the passing of this measure would be a nobler victory than any won for her amid the thunder of her guns; and the record of it would form, not only one of the proudest chapters in her history, but one of the brightest chapters in the history of the human race. It would constitute a noble lesson to strong nations, and would leave a mark upon the sands of time which, in after years, some forlorn and trampled people seeing, would take heart again.

To the winning of such a glorious victory over vain pride, over prejudice, over ancient hate, and long-continued injustice, the Representatives of Ireland now invited the Parliament and the people of England.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) said, he sincerely agreed with the last speaker in the hope that they would not bring into this important question, which was a purely political one, any of the old religious animosities amongst the people of Ireland, or draw comparisons between the loyalty of Protestants and Catholics. He believed there was just as much loyalty to be found among the Catholics of Ireland, as such, as among the Protestants, and he trusted that this question would not be discredited by the exhibition of religious animosity. He went a long way with the hon. Member in his account of the wrongs of Ireland. It was not necessary for any man who felt that this Bill degraded Ireland as much as it weakened the Empire to forget the long claims which Irelnad must have upon the sympathies of any Englishman who had read one single page in the many dark chapters in the history of Ireland. He would go further and say, without disagreeing with his hon. Friends around him, that the Parliament of Ireland was a sham Parliament from beginning to end, with the exception of a very few years, and that the Executive of Ireland was almost entirely English at a time when the Executive meant more and the Parliament less. He acknowledged that upon English shoulders must rest much of the responsibility for the evils from which Ireland had suffered. Moreover, a great many of those wrongs remained to the present day. One of the grossest wrongs which the people of Ireland had suffered was in connection with land; for we had crushed out the industries of Ireland, and had thereby thrown the people upon the land as their sole means of existence. He did not want to forget these things; and though we had tried in recent years to redress some of the wrongs from which the Irish people had suffered, yet something, perhaps, even worse had sprung up. Ireland had become the shuttlecock of English contending Parties. English Parties had indeed treated that unhappy country as if they were playing at a game of beggar-my-neighbour, both Parties making bids for Irish votes. He would go even further than that, and admit that long after the wrongs to which he referred—long after the memories even of the wrongs had died out—those wrongs left their mark upon the people, upon the descendants of the people who suffered them. But it might be said—"Why, if you admit all these things, do you not accept the solution of the difficulty which is offered to the country by the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister?" He would tell them why. Because the present condition of Ireland, and the present feelings entertained by the people, were the result of the growth of time, and he held that it was impossible to cure the evil by means of one hazardous experiment. They could not hope to instil at once into the minds of the people of Ireland the political qualities and capacities necessary for self-government, when they had not given them the means and the opportuities for political education. Could they expect the people of a country in which the first elements of civilization were wanting—[*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"]—those were the words of the Prime Minister himself—he asked, could they expect such a people to enter at once successfully into the work of self-government? And, he asked, could they expect it at a time when the Land League was exercising a tyranny over people more cruel than ever King Theebaw exercised over the people of Burmah? It had been said that the democracy of England had now come into power, and would do justice. He was sure the democracy would do justice; but he denied that it was a time to cast aside Ireland. If the Bill was as just to Ireland as he believed it to be unjust, and if it satisfied their sentimental fancies, or what he believed were the material wants and necessities of Ireland, instead of degrading and impoverishing the country, as he believed it would do, he should still refuse to support it, because Ireland contained a population of only 5,000,000 out of the 300,000,000 which made up the British Empire, and he considered that the great bulk of the Empire was entitled to the first consideration. The people of this country—and he could speak especially for the working men of Lancashire—were beginning to see the immense importance of the great Imperial federation; but the unity of the Empire was not the question at all. It was the unity of the United Kingdom—the heart and centre of the

Empire—that was at stake, and it was a union of which Ireland should be proud to be a member. He believed the Irishmen outside Ireland had, perhaps, done more to win the British Empire, to raise it to its present great position, and to people it, than even the English or the Scotch, and at the present moment were, perhaps, doing more to govern it. There were special reasons why Ireland should still remain side by side with England, a portion of the governing body of the Empire. One great reason was that all the Irishmen in the Empire did not reside within the limits of these Islands. Looking to the vast number of Irish centres in our Colonies, supposing the Irish Members were driven from that House, he doubted whether the Irish in the Colonies would be content to be governed by a Parliament from which the mother land was excluded. Even if the Irish in the Colonies were willing to recognize such a Parliament, he wanted to know whether the consequences would be such as to increase the number of Loyalists in our Colonies? The Prime Minister could not stop with Ireland, because this Home Rule was a solvent of almost universal application. The Prime Minister intimated his readiness to grant self-government to England, Scotland, and Wales; but to be consistent that must be followed out with regard to every country town and village. As to Scotland and Wales, he held that they had greater claims to self-government than Ireland, because Scotland had been more of an independent nation than ever Ireland was, and Wales retained its language, a great mark of national sentiment, whereas the language of Ireland was dying out every day. If Scotland and Wales had as great or greater claims than Ireland to Home Rule, and if it were claimed and conceded, a further burden of taxation must fall upon poor unfortunate England. If Scotland were to choose to claim such a Bill as this, the taxation of Scotland would be £2,500,000 less than at present; and the result would be that the whole taxation necessary to bear the burden of the Empire would fall upon England, and England alone, with the exception of a fixed amount paid by Scotland and by Ireland. This was not a state of things that England would be able to bear. Then they were told that the Bill would not lead to separation from England. He ventured to say that the very degradation that the Bill imposed upon Ireland would tend to bring about this separation. [*Cheers from the Irish Members.*] Well, he had heard the cheers from the Irish Members with no surprise. They cheered the statement, showing that they believed what he had said. The tone of hon. Members had lately changed in the House. No longer did they hear the snorting of the war-horse when hon. Members below the Gangway addressed the House. Now it was with "bated breath and whispering humbleness." Either hon. Members were over-acting their part, or they were too meek entirely. He wanted to know what were the present national aspirations of the Irish Members? Their tone before the General Election was very different to what it was now. He wanted to know whether, if they were to have an Irish Parliament of their own, they had been commissioned by their constituents to accept a measure like the present, with all its qualifications? They had been told that the last link between the two countries was the Crown. He would like to ask if it was not a fact that the hon. Member (Mr. T. D. Sullivan), who now presided at the Mansion House in Dublin, caused a rag with a crownless harp to wave over his official residence? Therefore, it would seem from this that the last link of the Crown had disappeared already. [MR. T. D. SULLIVAN: I will explain to the hon. Gentleman if he will permit me.] The Bill before the House would allow Ireland to sink from being a Sister Country into the position of a tributary and vassal State. He, for one, would not allow, if he could help it, Ireland to sink from the position she held side by side with the people of England and Scotland, and to put on the old Parliamentary clothes which England had already discarded, in the shape of property qualifications for Members with taxation without representation. If the Irish Members did not represent the people of Ireland on the question of nationality, did they represent them on the question of the land, which he believed to be at the bottom of the whole of this matter? If they did not represent them on the Land Question they did not represent them on any question at all. He believed that the people of Ireland were bribed to vote for hon. Members below the Gangway by promises with regard to the land, and would they accept this Bill, which provided for the payment of a tribute to a foreign State? Anyone who had watched the current of public opinion in Ireland before the General Election must have seen that the question of the land was placed before that of nationality; and, indeed, his own opinion was that the question of the land was behind the whole difficulty in Ireland. Again, he wanted to know whether, if they represented neither a nationality nor the land, they represented that combination of different interests—the priesthood, for instance—and were commissioned to accept a Bill which said that never, under any circumstances whatever, should the Roman Catholic religion be endowed in Ireland? [*Cheers.*] They might cheer now, but that was not what they told their constituents at the General Election. Then, with regard to finance, what a degraded position would Ireland find herself in with three-fourths of her Revenue collected and paid to a Foreign State, with a Receiver General to receive the money, as the people were not to be trusted, just as a similar officer was appointed to receive the taxes of the Egyptian people. But not only was there to be a Receiver General, but there were to be two sets of Judges, because the Irish people could not be trusted to deal with the Revenues when collected. The hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell), in, perhaps, the only speech in which he declared to having a policy at all, told the people of Ireland that he should be prepared to protect their native industries; but the Bill now before the House would not enable him to do that, because the taxes would be levied by the English Parliament, and thus the hon. Member and his Friends would be left with a grievance. The Bill would be full of grievances, and new grievances, too, that would suit the American paymaster; for the more grievances there were in Ireland the more reason and ground would there be to agitate for the final separation of the two countries. He maintained that the degradation imposed upon Ireland by this Bill, accepted as it was by the men who sat below the Gangway on totally different terms from anything they mentioned before the General Election, was a degradation which neither the people of Scotland or Wales would accept, nor did he believe that the Irish Members themselves, nor the Irish people, would accept the measure, if there was one spark of manhood among them. At present they derived every possible advantage from being connected with a free country. For these reasons, he did not believe the Bill would be permanent, and a termination of the contest. The Prime Minister was not himself, until recently, in favour of the principle of his own Bill. It would be found that by its provisions the Prime Minister was placing the people of Ireland in a garden, every tree of which was laden with forbidden fruit, and he was placing them in a garden where there was a man tempting them on to that very separation which, at the present moment, he was accustomed to deprecate. Twice in the course of his speech on moving the second reading the Prime Minister distinctly said it was only at this moment that he was not in favour of repeal. Was not that placing a strong temptation in the way of separation before the Irish people? Besides, there was in this garden a tree of knowledge which would be more fatal to the Irish people than if they had continued their connection with the English Parliament, or than anything which was done even in the worst days of English oppression. They had learnt lessons already from Mr. Gladstone's policy in dealing with Ireland. The hon. Member for the City of Cork, in 1881, had stated that the Prime Minister would yield to the people of the Transvaal what they demanded, and that he would eat his own words. Well, that turned out to be the fact very soon afterwards, as the hon. Member for Cork had predicted. Then the Prime Minister told them that the Irish would not put up with English rule because our laws came to them in a foreign garb; but that was an argument which must fall to the ground at once when looked into. It was a most remarkable fact that, with the exception of agrarian crime, Ireland was more free from law-breaking than, perhaps, any other nation. The crime, apart from agrarian crime, committed in Ireland, was a great deal less than that committed by the Irish who lived outside Ireland. More than that, an Irishman was more amenable to English law than were either the Scotchman or the Englishman. Since the death of Lord Palmerston, an Irishman who knew his country and how to deal with his countrymen, after Mr. Disraeli had outgeneralled the present Prime Minister with the English democracy, the Prime

Minister had turned to the Irish democracy. In spite of his 50 years of public service, the Prime Minister had come as a novice to Irish affairs 20 years ago, and he had been less in sympathy with Ireland than with any other portion of the Three Kingdoms. Why was it that Scotland was contented, while Ireland was not? Scotland had had no more advantages given to her than Ireland had had. Some 20 years ago Ireland was becoming more and more contented. But though the Prime Minister came upon the scene at that time, he had hardly given his attention to the subject of the treatment of Ireland at all. He ought to have been the best man to deal with the matter, for he had more opportunities than any other man to make himself acquainted with the subject. He lived near to Ireland, but it seemed as if all his experience had been gathered from the Irish officials. If the Irish people had been governed as the Scotch had been governed, by their own people, the complaints that had been made would never have been put forward. When in Scotland the Prime Minister dwelt upon his connection with Scotland, in England he was a full-blooded Englishman, and when in Wales he spoke of his connection with that country; but he had never heard a speech of the Prime Minister in which he had said that he had any connection with Ireland. It would be possible for the Prime Minister to leave his home in Wales and go over to Ireland to learn the real state of affairs in that country. If Irish affairs had been managed by Irishmen, and Scotch affairs had been managed by Scotchmen, the present state of the country would be much more satisfactory than it was. The hon. Member for Glasgow, who formerly represented an Irish constituency (Mr. Mitchell Henry), had stated that within his recollection Irish Members had never been consulted on Irish legislation. The Prime Minister's main argument for the Bill was itself an insult to Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman was not willing that Irish Members should sit in that House, because there was not enough ability in the country to furnish Representatives to two Parliaments. Why had the hon. Member for Cork not disclosed what his scheme was? The present Bill, which was really a break-up of the Empire, was one of the many so-called "messages of peace" to Ireland, and would, like its predecessors, end in war, as it would hand over the government of Ireland to men who would allow no peace to subsist either between the rich or the poor in that country. Why should not the House try to satisfy Ireland as they had satisfied Scotland? Any measure which degraded Ireland as this did could not be a measure of peace to that country. He contended that this was no measure of peace that they were sending to the Irish people. Then again, they had been told that if the Bill did not pass there would be an appeal to the people. The very complaint made against the promoters of the Bill was that, when they had a legitimate occasion to explain Home Rule, they let the opportunity pass. Even more, they led the people of England, to whom they now threatened to appeal, to form an entirely opposite opinion as to what their policy was to be. He was not afraid of going before the people of Ireland; he would not be afraid to tell the people of England that the democracy just admitted to the franchise had been cajoled and deceived at the Elections by the Leaders of the Liberal Party. He was perfectly willing to go before the people and meet the cry of "Vote for Gladstone and a £50,000,000 loan"—a loan that would probably reach £150,000,000; go to the people and speak to them in plain English, without hair-splitting equivocation and empty-sounding words, such as "autonomy and coercion," meant not to enlighten, but to deceive the people they pretended to trust. Let the people know that the coercion intended was not coercion to protect the loyal and the law-abiding, but coercion by those who had defied the law, who had plundered the rich, but who were the greatest enemies the poor of Ireland ever had; coercion by men who smashed into cottages and did dark deeds under the doubtful light of the moon. Let the Government go before the people of England, and tell them they had entrusted with votes the men who had arrived at political age, and come into the heritage their fathers won for them—tell these men that they were so cowardly and unjust that they were not fitted to govern the people of Ireland. For his own part, he did not believe that the English and Scotch democracy were so unjust that they could not be trusted to deal fair and equal justice to Ireland, and every part of the United Kingdom; and if coercion were required to enforce the law they would apply it to any part of the Kingdom. What the democracy wanted was that Ireland should be bound to England and Scotland by equal laws. Let the facts be put before the democracy of England, and he had no fear of the result. If justice was to be invoked, explain that justice was interpreted as a reward for those men who had broken the laws, not justice that meant allowing fair play to honest and industrious men who minded their own business and did their daily duty—the men who were the only mainstay of law and order in any nation.

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir LYON PLAYFAIR) (Leeds, S.): In answer to the statement of the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury), I am free from the difficulty which some hon. Members feel, that they are called upon to deal with a question which they did not explain to their constituencies during the Election. Both at the General Election and at my re-election I stated that the time had arrived when we must give a large measure of Home Rule to Ireland, and I was returned to this House with a distinct understanding that I would promote it. The hon. Member for Preston challenges Scotchmen to explain how they can support this Bill. As a Scotchman who fully admits the vast benefits which his country has derived from the Union, I can readily explain why I have come to the conclusion that Ireland should be separately treated. Scotland preserved by the Union all the institutions which were peculiarly national. Her own system of law and Courts of Justice were maintained. Her much-cherished Presbyterian form of worship was made the State form of faith. Her parochial schools and her four democratic Universities, so unlike those of England, were included in the Articles of the Union. And in spite of it, or rather by it, Scotland is as much a nation now as when the Union Act was passed. Every attempt to weaken her distinct nationality has been indignantly repelled. I am old enough to recollect how profoundly Scotland was agitated when the Royal Arms were altered, and when the Lion of Scotland was removed from the dexter to the sinister side of the shield. How different was the Union of Ireland with Great Britain! That was carried against the wish of the entire people. This House received Petitions against it signed by 707,000 persons; while only 3,000 could be got to petition in its favour. And when it was effected, by the unworthy means which every person knows, the English Government proceeded to Anglicize Ireland by centralized bureaucratic government. An ascendant Protestant Church had long existed, and had been in conflict with the Catholic faith professed by the great bulk of the people. Our policy of Protestant ascendancy prevented the recognition of nationality, so that the centralized Government necessarily proceeded on English ideas. Fox protested against this, but he was unheeded. His words are warnings to us still—

> "I would have the Irish Government regulated by Irish notions and Irish prejudices; and I am convinced that the more she is under Irish Government, the more she will be bound to English interests."

Alas! we were deaf to these wise words; and, though we have in good faith tried to govern Ireland according to our English ideas, we have failed to Anglicize the country, and now her suppressed nationality is the main spring of our troubles. Disorder and discontent existed before the Union; since then disloyalty has been added. The disorders generally arose from agrarian causes. The discontent was mainly due to our abominable fiscal and penal laws, which crushed Irish trade and commerce, and prevented Irish Catholics from the exercise of civil and religious liberties. But, in spite of this discontent, disloyalty to England did not appear till towards the close of last century. When Ireland was denuded of troops by the wars in which England was so frequently engaged, the Irish Parliaments voted men and money in her aid, and the people took no advantage of her weakness. In the Scotch Rebellions of 1715 and 1745, in the long war ending 1763, Ireland was conspicuously loyal. In 1759, when France made such great preparations for a descent on Ireland, the Roman Catholics aided the English Government, and the City of Cork was especially loyal. The Volunteer movement had a political purpose to secure Parliamentary Government for Ireland, and was as much supported by Protestants as by Catholics. But it was not disloyal to England. When Grattan, backed by the Volunteers, moved an independent Parliament in 1782, his words were thoroughly loyal to the connection with England. He then said—

> "The Crown is one link, the Constitution another. You can get a King anywhere; but England is the only country with whom you can participate a free Constitution."

These words were not disloyal. Disloyalty became pronounced towards the end of the century, when Fitzgibbon and Beresford persuaded the King to recall Lord Fitzwilliam, and break Pitt's promises to the Catholics. The dragon's teeth were sown in the Rebellion of 1798. Ever since 1800, either open and defiant rebellions, or veiled insurrections, have sprung up every few years, with the same regularity as epidemics of small-pox. They have been easily suppressed, and we have learned by experience that Ireland can be kept down by force. Fox knew that in 1797; but he thought the game not worth the candle then, and it certainly is not worth it now. Fox said what many of us think in our hearts at the present hour—

> "I am not afraid, but I would rather see Ireland totally separated than kept in obedience by force."

There are great historians now living, and at least one English Judge, humane men, and personal friends of many of us, who write history as if they believed that a diluted Cromwellian system is best fitted for the government of Ireland. Not literally of course; not by the massacre of whole towns, or by the deportation of rebels to the Plantations, but by a firm enforcement of exceptional laws, and by the rigorous punishment of evil-doers. Even among ourselves there are men who are not ashamed to say that force is the best government for Ireland, and that suspensions of the Habeas Corpus, Crimes Acts, even martial law, are legitimate means of governing Ireland. They forget the warning of Milton—

> "Who overcomes by force,
> By force hath overcome but half his foe."

A wise physician does not use violent remedies to cure disease. He tries to discover the origin of bad humours in the body, and he applies alteratives to the constitution, for he has learned by experience that even if he apply the red-hot cautery to a sore, it will break out in other parts of the body. Government by force is a comprehensible policy if consistently and rigorously applied. The great Tory physician, the Marquess of Salisbury, has given what he calls the true recipe for governing Ireland. The dose is certainly a powerful one, for he states it to be 20 years of strong government, followed by ameliorative medicines of local government, and dropping of the Coercion Acts. But if, as thus enunciated by the Marquess of Salisbury, force applied by a firm and consistent Government, backed by Coercion Laws, be the true policy for governing Ireland under the Union, each one of our ameliorative Acts has been a mistake, for it has weakened our powers of applying force with effect. A policy of force was much more easy of application when there was a dominant Protestant Church, or when Catholics laboured under civil and religious disabilities. The Disestablishment of the Church and the bestowal of equal rights on the Catholics have served the righteous cause of justice, but have lessened your powers to govern by force. Coercion was more easy when the Protestant rulers formed the educated, and the Catholics formed the ignorant class. When I first visited Ireland in 1842, though there were 500,000 children at school, the survival of the Penal Code was still seen in a residue of the population of 4,000,000 of people who could neither read nor write, and of 1,500,000 who could read but not write. Now you have a population through which education is much more diffused. They can and do read their national papers, and they are less easily than formerly governed by force. Our recent Acts—the extension of the franchise, the vote by ballot, the redistribution of seats, the new relations established between landlords and tenants, are all measures which have lessened your power of governing Ireland by force. You may by conquest overrun a country and suppress its liberties if your power be sufficient; but who ever heard of a free country, acting on a Constitutional basis, contemplating the possibility of governing an enfranchised nation by force? Parliament, no doubt, acted from the highest motives and the deepest convictions when it gave these increased liberties to the people of Ireland, and it is not now likely that it will ever consent to suppress the liberties thus freely given. But their exercise is inconsistent with continued government by coercion or exceptional laws, and no doubt the late Government felt this when it determined not to re-enact them. All our measures of amelioration have been gigantic mistakes if for the future there is to be no policy except that of force for the government of Ireland. You deny that such is your intention; but what alternatives have been suggested in our debates that have a chance of meeting a demand for Home Rule? My right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) at one time thought that National Councils might suffice; but he has abandoned that opinion. O'Connell suggested the same idea in 1843; but the great Liberator found no encouragement then, and it is no use suggesting it now. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham admits that himself. My right hon. Friend the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) is in favour of local government, not in 20 years like the Marquess of Salisbury, but immediately. This sort of dignified vestrydom is the beginning and end of his concession to the national demands of Ireland, because he declines to trust to the Irish people an Executive, as he thinks law and order should be the duty of English government. I admit that there is an anomaly in offering Parliamentary government to a people who have not been trained by good local institutions to govern themselves. We were fully warned at the time of the Union that the extension of local government was a corollary of that Act; but the warning was unheeded. Lord Clare, whom hon. Gentlemen opposite are fond of quoting, in his famous speech on the Union, used these words—

> "If you do not qualify the mass of your people for the employment of sober liberty, you will never teach them to appreciate the blessings of it."

But the Union was followed by centralized government, and the people were not taught to govern themselves. Another Irish statesman, Grattan, who knew the people better than Fitzgibbon, used words with the same meaning—

> "You can only combat the wild spirit of democratic liberty by the regular spirit of organized liberty, such as may be found in a limited Monarchy and a free Parliament."

Eighty-six years have passed, and we are not one inch forward in the good government of Ireland. No doubt many grievances have been removed, but the political hatred of the Irish for our centralized form of English government is as keen as ever. Even the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) denounces our system of Castle government. Can anyone say that it has largely benefited the social condition of the Irish people? There is no doubt that they are better clad and better housed; but I hesitate to say that they are, on the whole, better fed than they were when the potato blight struck the country in 1846. But then there were 8,295,000 people in Ireland, and there are now only 5,000,000. A Government cannot point to such depopulation as an evidence of good government. At that time I became intimately acquainted with the state of Ireland, because my distinguished friend Sir Robert Peel, then Prime Minister, sent me over to correspond with him as to the probable effects of the coming famine. What ought the English Government to have done after that terrible event and consequent depopulation? We ought in consequence of that famine to have done our best to reform the Land Laws, and to teach the lessened population how to increase the products of the soil. For it is true now, as it was then, that farming is the staple industry of Ireland. But if you look all round, and not to exceptional districts, the state of the agriculture of Ireland is in a melancholy condition. No doubt the pressure of foreign competition has acted upon Ireland as it has done upon Great Britain, and has forced large tracts of arable land to be converted into pasture, and by this change live stock has largely increased. The right hon. Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) boasts of this increase as evidence of agricultural prosperity in Ireland. But, after balancing the loss of corn crops by the increase of live stock, the result is that the production of food in Ireland is so much less that 2,000,000 of people less could be fed by the products of the soil than was the case 30 years ago. The change of crops has also taken place in Great Britain; but the aggregate food of the people has been maintained. It is a noticeable fact, that, while the produce of food per acre of all kinds of crops in Great Britain is not deteriorating, the produce of land for every crop except hay in Ireland is falling in an alarming way. In 1845, and for many years before the Famine, the average produce of potatoes in Ireland was between six and seven tons per acre, and that is the average produce in Great Britain at the present day. But in Ireland it has fallen to 3¼ tons per acre, or less than one-half. In other crops the same melancholy reduction of produce has occurred. Thus, though turnips are more freely grown in Ireland than formerly, the average produce per acre is only 12½ tons, while in Great Britain it is 15 tons. In Ireland mangold produces 13¼ tons per acre; in Great Britain 18 tons. Cabbage, flax, and other kinds of produce show the same deteriorating condition. Cattle alone show an increase — a steady increase — for about 15 years, and now it is stationary. Sheep have declined largely; but so they have in this country. The hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) was quite right in saying that the export of live stock to this country, though it brings back much needed money to Ireland, is not a permanent source of prosperity to the nation. For they carry with them much of the material value of the soil which can only be compensated by a large import of foreign manure. But this import, in the case of Ireland, is ridiculously small. The deduction from these facts is that the staple industry of Ireland is in an unsound condition, and that the disturbed condition of the people under our government has failed to maintain prosperity in the staple industry of the country. Let us turn to the state of manufactures in Ireland. For a time we did terrible damage to their rising manufactures, which we ruthlessly stamped out by cruel protective laws in favour of England, and by prohibition of exports to foreign parts. When these laws were repealed, manufactures rose again by leaps and bounds; and the hon. Member for East Mayo graphically described how prosperous Ireland became under Grattan's Parliament. But he was wrong in ascribing their rapid extinction entirely to the Act of Union of 1800. There was a much more potent cause than this at work. Steam engines applied to cotton and woollen manufactures were introduced at the end of the century, and handloom weavers had to give way all over the Kingdom. But there was this difference. The men and children employed in these industries in Great Britain were gradually absorbed into the factories which rapidly arose by new capital invested. But in Ireland the Union did not promote peace and tranquillity, and capital refused to go to Ireland. The growth of manufactures is, however, most important to draw off pressure upon land, and they are necessary factors for the prosperity of a nation. We are responsible for the good government of Ireland; but we have failed to produce peace and contentment among the people, and industrial capital will not embark on a sea of political troubles. Yet even in Ireland there is capital in abundance if there were security for its investment. There is nothing in the insular position of Ireland, or in the industrial habits of the people, to prevent Ireland from becoming a manufacturing nation, except that England cannot govern it, and fails to preserve public tranquillity. Ireland naturally has advantages which Switzerland, Holland, and Norway do not possess, and yet they are active manufacturing countries. The coal fields of Ireland are not large, but still 200,000,000 tons are available, while not above 1,000 men are employed in winning it. She has abundant iron ore, though it is not close to the coal. Switzerland has neither the one or the other, and is separated by mountain barriers from countries which supply these essentials of industry. Ireland is indented by the sea, and is close to the coal fields of Scotland and Wales, and coal is cheaper in all its parts than it is in London and its surrounding industrial towns. But in most parts of Ireland, except the North, manufactures are miserably represented. Switzerland, in spite of complete absence of raw material, meets us in every market of the world; Ireland, in three out of four of her Provinces, is content to rest on the produce of her soil. For Switzerland has a contented population governing itself by freely elected Executives, while Ireland chafes at our English rule, and refuses to be tranquil under it. We have failed by our system of government to give that contentment to the population which is necessary to give prosperity to agriculture, or other forms of productive industry. Why has our education, founded in 1833, not produced better results? That system was a mixed one, the schools being for all creeds, and has been generously supported by large annual Votes from Parliament. But it failed to secure the hearty confidence and co-operation of the Roman Catholics. And what does the last Census indicate as the result? That still 41 per cent of the people of Ireland above five years of age cannot read and write. In the Province of Connaught more than one-half, or 53 per cent, are in this state of lamentable ignorance. The State is only justified in spending so much money on education on the ground that it forms good productive citizens, and keeps men out of the prison and the workhouse. That has been the result of 16 years' national education in England; has it produced a like result by 53 years' experience in Ireland? Compare the prisons in the two countries, not as regards crime, for that, until recent years, used to be less in Ireland than in England, but as regards the education of prisoners. In England only 3·3 per cent of the male and 4½ per cent of the female prisoners read and write well. In Ireland no less than 51½ per cent, or more than one-half of the male prisoners, and 31½ per cent of the females are thus well educated. In England education fits men to keep out of prison. In Ireland it seems to fit men to go into prison. In the cotton factories of Lancashire there are 250,000 Irish operatives, but there is not one Irish employer of labour. This is not the case in the United States, or in our Colonies, where we find Irishmen, especially those of the second generation, among the most skilled workmen, rising not only to responsible positions, but also constantly among the inventors who take out patents for improvements in industries. The fact is, our system of education in Ireland, based on our English ideas, has hitherto been a literary education in which neither the hand nor eye is trained. The Christian Brothers in these schools have been doing something in this direction, and thus pupils are more fitted for domestic manufactures. Cottage employments like those which in recent years have been so largely founded in the Grand Duchy of Baden, and which have emptied their workhouses and prisons, are especially adapted for Ireland, for they create a population which is readily absorbed into factories when these arise. If we let the Irish manage their own education in their own way, we may rest assured that a future generation of Irish will not be mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, but will take that position in labour which they do in America and in our Australian and other Colonies. In all branches of Irish education we have failed by insisting upon imposing English ideas. In higher education we have failed as dismally as we have in regard to the elementary schools, for we have insisted that Roman Catholics should be educated on a mixed system in the Colleges. This we did in spite of ample warning. Fitzgibbon, when Member for Dublin University in Grattan's Parliament, recommended that Roman Catholics should be educated in diocesan schools, and then pass into Trinity College under their own Divinity Professors. The Provost of Trinity, Hely Hutchinson, coincided with these views. But the English Government, as usual, ignored Catholic wishes, and gave them mixed Colleges as they had given them mixed schools, and the Roman Catholic hierarchy became hostile to the higher as they were to the lower education. Then the Conservative Government, answering again in English accents to the demand for a Teaching Catholic University, accorded a sort of Chinese Examining Board which they called the Royal University. In all these duties of Government, whether to promote agriculture, manufactures, or education, Englishmen have wished to act wisely and liberally. They have failed because they have never touched the heart of the Irish people, never sympathized with them, never understood them. And we may well comprehend how an historian like Alison, who had no sympathy with the Irish, should sum up the results of our rule in these melancholy words—

> "Conquest has failed in producing submission, severity in enforcing tranquillity, indulgence in awaking gratitude."

And yet many hon. Members on both sides of the House wish to go on with the dreary treadmill of our English system of government! You have before you the significant fact that five-sixths of the Representatives of Ireland desire a domestic Government of the Irish by the Irish. You have the important fact, minimize it as you will, that the whole hierarchy of priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church, although they long stood outside the political agitation for Home Rule, have now joined it. Yet you declare that the demand is not national. The Conservatives have among them a small but able number of Irish Members who support this denial. They represent faithfully the opinions of that minority which has long approved and supported the English rule. They have aided England for centuries to rule or misrule Ireland. But now a large section of the Liberal Party have lost faith in their political sagacity, and a responsible Government has brought forward a plan for governing Ireland by a majority representing the wishes of the largest portion of the people. Yet there are scarcely expressions strong enough, at least outside this House, to denounce our convictions as insincere, and our project for its absurdity and enormity. Have Irishmen no talent for Parliamentary Government? Imperfect as were their Parliaments under Poyning's Law, and absurd as was Grattan's Parliament, if viewed as a true representation of the people, still the names of Grattan and Flood, Fitzgibbon, Plunket, and Curran show that Irish Parliaments can produce great Parliamentarians. Without going back to the many distinguished Irishmen in the last 100 years who have aided in our debates, we know that the National Party opposite are skilled in debate and in Parliamentary tactics. It is true that they have displeased this House by obstructive tactics. Personally, I can have no motive for lessening the severity of your judgment upon their Parliamentary tactics, for they made life a burden to me, when it was my duty, as Deputy Speaker and Chairman, to support Order in debate. But still we must all admit that their tactics were worked well and with a set purpose. They were not new, for they were precisely the same as those used with such effect in the Irish Parliament of 1771, when every question was debated for hours after midnight. Members who can use Parliamentary Forms and Procedure with such effect to prevent legislation which they hate will readily adapt themselves to promote legislation which they love. No one asserts that if you give Ireland a Parliament and an Executive Government there will be no mistakes in its working. Probably there will be as many errors—there can scarcely be more—in the new system of government as those committed by the English Executive in its long connection with Ireland. But responsibility in the exercise of power is a marvellous improver of government, when under the open criticism of the people. Errors in government by the Irish will be more readily forgiven than in government by the English. Many in this House consider it madness to send to the new Parliament in Ireland men who have set up a Government ruled by an Association instead of by the Executive of the Queen. Well, we have had to do like things in other parts of the Empire before, and they resulted in singular success. The Provinces of Canada were excited into actual open rebellion by a party of men who assumed to themselves the title of the "United Empire Loyalists," a title of evil omen that some Ulster men seem to desire to revive. The rebel Papineau, a Catholic in the Lower Province, was condemned to death, and a Presbyterian — Lyon Mackenzie—in the Upper Province had the temerity to offer a reward of £500 for the body of the Governor General. Both these men headed open rebellion; but both men soon afterwards became trusted Members of the Legislature, and helped to bring peace and contentment to Canada under a Government trusted by the people. The Nationalists have not yet been driven to open rebellion; and if you trust those in whom the people have trust you are not likely to be disappointed. I understand the opposition to this Bill by the Conservative Party opposite. They wish to keep the Act of Union as it is, and believe that they can govern Ireland on its present system by a firm enforcement of the law. Yet what is the existing form of Union which they so dearly love? Does it consist in the strength of our United Parliament? No doubt that was formed by a very solemn Act; but it was not one whit more solemn or binding than the Acts of 1782 and 1783, by which Grattan's Parliament was created, and which was declared to be for ever inviolable. In what consists the inherent strength of this United Parliament? It contains 86 Irish Members banded together to obtain a domestic Legislature for Ireland, and determined, till they do so, to use their power in order to thwart all useful legislation for Great Britain. Truly, you cannot call the existing Parliament a strong and united Legislature, when you have an Irish garrison in your citadel with the avowed purpose of forcing it to capitulate. But perhaps the strength of the Union rests in the extra-Parliamentary support which you find in Ireland. If that exist, it is strange that 25,000 soldiers and 12,000 armed constables are required to keep up the courage of the supporters of the Union in Ireland. A true Union between different parts of the Kingdom should rest in the love and sentiment of its different peoples. But in Ireland political hatred to the Government of England embitters those genial and kindly feelings which the Irish have in an eminent degree. And because we try to preserve the Union on this basis you tell us, not in this House, because we are here to defend ourselves, but in excited meetings outside, that we are traitors to the Empire and desire separation. You say now that there are two nations in Ireland. They certainly did not exist last century, when Protestant Irish Parliaments existed. To their honour, they then tried to obtain equal rights for the Catholics and freedom of trade for the whole country. In the Volunteer movement, were not the Ulster Protestants conspicuous in the support of the claims for national autonomy? When the Act of Union was passed there were not more than 3,000 men in all Ireland who could be got to sign Petitions for the destruction of this autonomy. And now there are two nations. What a libel upon the Act of Union is this disintegration into two nations! If this libel on the Union be true that there are two nations in Ireland, I fear we must add a third nation which must be taken into account—the Greater Ireland beyond the seas. It has been my lot in recent years to make frequent visits to the United States. I know the passionate feeling which prevails among Irishmen to obtain Home Rule for their country. You who deny nationality for Ireland should go to America and see for yourselves the patriotism which exists there, and the many sacrifices which are made to win for Ireland a Government by the Irish. And those mistaken, rather than wicked, men who talk of armed resistance in Ulster will better think of the third nation of Greater Ireland, that could easily be drawn into violent measures. We who in our hearts and conscience believe that autonomy for Ireland will produce peace and contentment to all parts of it, and will promote the unity of the Empire, are stigmatized as traitors to the United Kingdom. Not, I believe, by any of our Colleagues on this side of the House, for though a few of them differ from us in wishing to preserve the Act of Union, they admit that our motive is to secure a greater unity by acting on the hearts and sympathies of the Irish. We believe that these are stronger bands of Union than any which you can devise by Acts of Parliament; and if you remove the causes of political hatred which prevail, you add to the unity and prosperity of our great Empire. I believe that the Irish themselves would adapt to such a Union the words of a song well known in another land—

> "The union of seas--the union of lands—
> The union of States none can sever;
> The union of hearts, the union of hands,
> And the Flag of the Union for ever."

Let me turn to the opponents of the Bill on this side of the House—and they are many—who do not share the opinion of the Conservative Leader that repressive government must be continued in Ireland for 20 years to fit her for ameliorative measures. They desire to introduce reforms in domestic government quickly, and in that they are more in accord with us than with the Conservatives. Yet, strangely enough, they intend to go into the same Lobby to enable the Tories to reject this Bill, both on its leading principle and in its details. That principle is plain and simple, and to it every detail is subordinate. It is that, as England has failed to govern Ireland—well, we must allow Ireland to be governed by the Irish in all that relates to her domestic affairs. The noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) is not far from accepting that principle, for he has denounced the English Government of the Castle, and is prepared to alter it fundamentally. We do not yet know his plan; but it certainly cannot be that he abandons centralized English Government for a decentralized English Government. He must, therefore, share with us in some sense or other the view that the Irish are to govern themselves, though, probably, not by a Statutory Parliament. Well, he may have 20 or 30 Members who join with him in the belief that local government will still suffice under an Executive which is not to be the Castle, but some better form of government; and, no doubt, his well-known talents will enable him to invent some form of government that will be altogether subordinate to the Imperial Parliament. But this is not the motive which will carry many Radicals into the Lobby with him. Some of them object to this Bill because they think that it is not based on the true spirit of democracy. They detest the high property qualifications given for the election of the first Order, and they dislike the inclusion of Peers into that Order. They especially abominate, as my right hon. Friend the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) does, the buying out of the landlords with English money, while the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale thinks that a necessary corollary of this Bill if it passes. Some dislike the Bill because Irish Members are excluded from this House; others because we have yielded and intend to keep them for certain purposes. There is every probability that if, instead of a Bill such as this, a Resolution affirming the principle of Home Rule for Ireland were offered to the House, not 30 Members would go into the Lobby from this side of the House against it. In their dislike to the Bill many Members of the most divergent opinions cohere, just as wet sand coheres under pressure. But when this is dried by the hot breath of the constituencies, this coherent mass will fall into its constituent grains, and there will be no Party left of consistence and coherence except the Tory Party, with its declared policy of suppressing the National League and governing Ireland by force. Has that Party realized the strength of democratic feeling not only in Ireland, but in Great Britain? When a Democracy has supreme power they put down riots and disorder, more rigorously than a Monarchy—as witness the draft riots in New York during their National War, or the recent Socialist outbreaks at Chicago. But the Tory Party will find by experience that the democratic constituencies of this country will not allow them to govern an enfranchised nation by force. The Government have offered their plan based on autonomy for Ireland, and they stand on the principle contained in it. I do not disguise the great difficulties of our task. There are mixed races in Ireland, and differences of faith embittered by centuries of strife and wrong-doing. But these difficulties have existed in other countries, and have been overcome. They were once as great in Scotland. They have been greater in Holland and in Switzerland. They have not been small in Germany. I believe that conferring automony on Ireland, so far from repealing the Union between Great Britain and Ireland, will cement that Union by making the material interests and sentiments of the two countries identical. You know that Burke has the kernel of truth in many of his speeches and writings. I end my speech, if you will allow me, by a short extract from his letter to Pery—

> "You are now beginning to have a country. I am persuaded, when that thing called a country is once formed in Ireland, quite other things will be done than were done, whilst the zeal of men turned to the safety of a Party, and whilst they thought its interest provided for by the distress and destruction of everything else."

Mr. A. R. D. ELLIOT (Roxburgh): Sir, the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down began his remarks by referring to the very great success which Scotland has had during its connection with England; but I could not help calling to mind, while he was praising the system under which Scotland has flourished, that he was, in the last Parliament, most earnest and persistent in resisting the desire we have to increase our own powers of self-government. My right hon. Friend said that that was because he was quite satisfied with what we already possessed. I do think it is a little inconsistent on the part of the right hon. Gentleman to advocate this principle now, seeing that he was most persistent in resisting what we were asking for and fighting for in this House at the time I refer to without any success whatever. The words which the right hon. Gentleman then used appear to me to have been almost as prejudiced as those with which he commenced his speech this evening, because he expressed the opinion that the great majority of the Members of this House were agreed as to the substance of the Bill, and that it was only about its details that there was any dispute amongst the Liberal Party. I am one of those who think that the Liberal Party did not find its principles for the first time on the 8th of April last; and although we have had several references to Fox and Grey, as well as other statesmen of rather early date, I know that my hon. and right hon. Friends on these Benches and in other parts of the House have been absolutely unable to find out a single Liberal statesman who has held Office in this country since the Union became an accomplished fact and has been in favour of a Repeal of the Union. We are taunted, I know, with being Liberal dissentients, and with deserting our Party; but I think, on the contrary, that the Liberal Party and the country owes a debt of gratitude to the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), who was not afraid, in rather difficult circumstances, to stick to his guns, and to show that he had some faith in Liberal principles, and that it was not a right and proper state of things that the Liberal Party should hold one creed up to the time when they took Office, and then, turning their back upon all the principles they had professed, go in for Home Rule in Ireland. Sir, there has been an entire break in the traditions of the Liberal Party. It is not necessary to go back to Fox and Grey, for they lived in very different times and under very different conditions from the present. One hundred years ago Charles Fox was the favourite of the Manchester manufacturers, because he stood up against Pitt in favour of high duties and Protection; and Lord Grey, just as much as any other Liberal statesman, was opposed to the Repeal of the Union after it had become an accomplished fact. That section of the Liberal Party which has seceded from Liberal principles in supporting this Bill is not merely departing from the traditions of one section of the House; they are departing from principles once common to early Liberals and early Radicals, with whom there had never been any question as to the Repeal of the Union; and the same may be said of Gentlemen who represented the Conservative or Tory Party. These hon. Gentlemen have not only gone back on the traditions of the Liberal Party; they have gone back on the traditions of the British nation. They have taken a line which, up to the 8th of April last, was absolutely new; and I ask them once more to cite a single instance of a statesman in this House having, up to that date, pronounced in favour of the Repeal of the Union. I remember that the hon. Gentleman opposite the Member for one of the Divisions of Liverpool, the President of the National League in Great Britain (Mr. T. P. O'Connor), made a speech on a former occasion; his language was prophetic, but certainly interesting; and he said that in four or five days the Prime Minister would make his speech, and that by the time the right hon. Gentleman sat down the Repeal of the Union would be an accomplished fact, and that not all the powers of earth could bring it back to life again. I quite agree with hon. Gentlemen who say that there is a great difference in the tone of hon. Members sitting below the Gangway opposite; but I think that, although their tone has changed, their demands have not been changed at all; and for that I respect them. They are now demanding the same thing as they did all through the last Parliament—the same policy of a separate Parliament and a separate Government for Ireland; and that is the policy which we have denounced in this House and throughout the country. It is not on a question of details that hon. Members around me are opposed to the Bill; it is that we object to the policy of setting up a separate Parliament and a separate Executive for Ireland. To say that the question is one of details, I think, is really unfair and illusive; and when we are asked by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen here and there to vote for the second reading, and are told that we shall only be doing this, that, or the other, I reply that we vote on the second reading of the Bill as we have it; we know what it is, and how it has been advocated through the country during the Recess by official persons, and with very little success on the whole. What they have been advocating is not this or that portion of the Bill, but the Bill as a whole. In answer to the challenge of the right hon. Gentleman below me that there are few Members on the Liberal side of the House who are against the principle of the Bill, I say that there are very few persons in this House, or even outside it, except those of the official class, who can say much for the scheme as a whole. I look to that part of the House where the Prime Minister might be expected to find his strongest support, and I find that there this scheme is objected to by three out of four of the Members who sit there. [“No, no!”] I have read the speeches delivered on this question throughout the country, and I have not seen the Land Purchase Bill advocated in the speech of any Radical Member, and that is inseparably connected with the present measure; and when I come to consider the other portion of the scheme—the Home Rule portion—supported by some hon. Members sitting in that part of the House, I cannot but call to mind the elaborate provisions introduced for the purpose of providing that if it should become an Act it cannot be altered or repealed without the consent of the Representatives from Ireland. But this policy upon which we are invited to enter is a policy which affects Great Britain as well as Ireland; and I say that Members representing Great Britain ought to be consulted, and that we ought to attach weight to their opinions as well as to the opinion of the Members from Ireland. British Members, by an immense majority, would decide in favour of maintaining the Union; and I say that, considering the way the matter has been brought before us and before the country, it would be an outrage on the rights of British electors if the Union were repealed without the consent of the Representatives of the people of Great Britain. Of course, we know that the special point of keeping Irish Members in this House is considered a matter of the greatest importance; and feeling strongly, as I do, that the supremacy of the Parliament at Westminster should be preserved, I yield to none in wishing that that representation may be continued. But that would be introducing a provision which would make this a new Bill. I do not complain of Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench for not at once undertaking to make this change; I think it right that they should have declined to commit themselves to a provision of the kind, because, as I have said, it would make the measure a new one. If we were to take the Bill *plus* the 103 Irish Members, we should be making an absurdity of the whole thing; and if that had been proposed in the first instance, I can, for my own part, hardly believe that the Bill would have received a first reading in this House. But that question is important, because, as has been pointed out, especially by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), that the admission of the Irish Members is the sign and mark of the retention of Imperial supremacy on the part of this House. I know that my hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) contended the other night that the supremacy of the British Parliament, in which there would not be a single Irish Representative, with reference to the future was maintained; but he could only arrive at that conclusion by saying that Clauses 24, 37, and 39 of the Bill were nothing more than honourable obligations, and that they had not the force and weight of law. Well, but these are the clauses on which the independence of the future Irish Parliament is to rest. I can only say that we are not arguing the point before the Judges; all we want is to make it plain as to whether the British Parliament shall be supreme and the Irish Parliament subordinate. Then we say it is not to argue upon the exact meaning of words as they stand, but that words ought to be introduced into the Bill to make the matter absolutely clear. There are many points from which this Bill may be looked at—there is the religious point of view, the landowning point of view, and the trading point of view; but I, for my part, and a large number with me, regard it mainly from a national point of view. Important as are these essential interests, the great questions for us to consider are whether we are to remain as one nation in the face of Europe and of the world, and whether we are to stand together like one nation in the face of a hostile and dangerous attack? I know that some Irish Members will say that Ireland will be nothing but a source of weakness to Great Britain. I do not believe that. I know that we have had trouble, and I know that we may have it again; but, after all, Irishmen have shared many dangers with us, and I am convinced will do so again.

I believe much in the policy of those statesmen who have tried to unite, and not to separate, the two peoples; who tried to redress grievances, but abating not one jot in their determination to maintain the unity of the Kingdom as a whole. That is the view which we have all held; but here a new departure is made, and I think hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Benches should come forward and show reason for the change. There are no reasons now in favour of it which were not equally good reasons two months ago; yet when some led the country to expect that the Prime Minister was about to adopt a policy of separate government in Ireland they were denounced, as I myself was, for supposing that the Prime Minister would adopt an impossible policy which no statesman in his senses would think of following. Finally, I say that we, and those who think with us on this question, are endeavouring to preserve that policy to which we Liberals have been attached. Let us not change it without seeing some reason for it; let us maintain this nation intact, and when the time comes for others to take over the government of the country, let it be one that presents to the world a united front.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Justin M'Carthy.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Debate *further adjourned* till *Thursday.*

MOTIONS.

—o—

LOWE'S CHARITY (LICHFIELD).

RESOLUTION.

SIR JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): At this early hour of the morning I must ask the House to grant me their indulgence for a few minutes that I may bring before them a question of some importance. I say a question of some importance, because some Members of the House may not be aware that the Charities and Endowed Schools of Great Britain, taken as a whole, have an income sufficient to defray the expenses of the entire education of the country. I particularly wish to draw the attention of the House for a moment to the Charities in the City of Lichfield. I have here a Blue Book—a Report of the Charity Commissioners of some 64 years ago. At that time there were 61 Charities in the City of Lichfield, and since then the circumstances connected with the Charities have very little altered. Only the other day Lowe's Charity, one of the richest of these Charities, came before the Commissioners for a new scheme; and the Charity Commissioners, in their wisdom, introduced a scheme which I, as the Representative of the Lichfield Division of Staffordshire, at the urgent request of the working classes of Lichfield, resisted, because it did not provide for the election by the ratepayers of that city of a certain number of representative Governors. I asked Her Majesty's Commissioners to go so far as to grant that one-half of the Governors or Trustees, or whatever they are called, should be elected directly by the ratepayers, who are interested in this Charity. The Charity Commissioners declined to accede to my request. They proposed that of the 12 Trustees seven—the majority—should be co-optative, thus continuing the rotten system of self-election, a system which is certainly not fit for this century; and that the other five, whom the Commissioners were pleased to call representative Trustees, should be elected by the Town Council. Now, I put it to hon. Mmbers of this House whether the Town Councils of small places like Lichfield are not differently constituted to the Town Councils of large places like Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool? The Town Councils of small places are composed practically of the same people who manage the Charities, or, at any rate, of the friends of the Trustees or Governors of the Charities existing in the towns. What is the consequence? Why, that you have one clique electing another, and a continuance of abuses. I will turn for a moment to some of these abuses, which are reported in the Blue Book to which I have already referred. On page 398 it is shown that the Trustees of the Conduit Lands, one of the richest Charities in England, spent, in five years, £103 upon dinners and other expenses of meetings of the Trustees. The Trustees of the Charities of the Biddulphs

> "distribute amongst the poor of the City of Lichfield £5 yearly upon Good Friday and Christmas Eve, by equal portions;"

But the money is distributed in a public-house, and by the landlord of that public-house. One £40 is missing. This is a Parliamentary Report, and therefore the language is Parliamentary in the extreme. The Commissioners euphoniously say—

> "We can discover no further trace of the £40 given by the elder Simon Biddulph for loans."

We next come to Hinton's Charity. For three years no payments were made to the poor, and three parcels of land are reported as lost. I suppose the land was merged in the adjoining property; at all events, it was lost to the Charity. Then we come to Mousley's Charity. The Funds passed into the hands of the Town Clerk and the Corporation, and the interest paid was at the rate of £3 6*s*. 8*d*. per cent without security. In the case of Elias Ashmole's Charity, no distribution of funds took place for 13 years; and in another case—Luke Robinson's Charity—the funds were only given to one pet parish, when they should have been distributed all over the City. In the case of Caldwell's Gift, the property—namely £40—has disappeared. In the case of Minor's Gift, 10*s*. was to be paid yearly for a sermon to be yearly preached on St. Thomas's Day in St. Mary's Church, Lichfield; but the money is not now paid. In respect to Marshall's Charity, the one acre and a-half of arable land lying in Boley, near Filham's Ditch, the rent of which was to be distributed amongst the poor of Lichfield, "is now unknown." Then we come to Simpson's Charity.

> "The money is generally given away about the month of March, so many charities being dispensed at Christmas that it has been thought advisable to distribute this at a later period."

Why the money should not be distributed at Christmas, when, as a rule, distress is greater than at any other time of the year, I cannot understand. I have had considerable correspondence with the Charity Commissioners in regard to Lowe's Charity, and I presented to the Commissioners a large Petition signed by 309 of the poor inhabitants and working men of the City of Lichfield in favour of the future Governors being elected by the ratepayers. But the Commissioners declined to accede to my request. The Charity needs reform. The accounts have been audited by the Trustees themselves; and it was found that, while there was great distress in the City during the winter just past, there was no less a sum than £443 in the hands of the Clerk to the Trustees, who is very closely connected with the office of a solicitor. The money was really at the disposal of the partner of one of the Trustees, and no interest was paid upon it. Now, what the people of the City of Lichfield claim is, that they shall have the power in the future of electing their own Representatives, or, at least, a majority of them. That is the principle which I wish the House to affirm upon this occasion. It is no new principle, because some eight years ago it was adopted in the case of an endowed school in the parish of Stamfordham, Northumberland. I have considerable property in that parish, and I took an interest in the school. When I began to interest myself in the Institution there were only three boys in it. I need not say there had been Chancery suits, because I do not know any Charity in England—I can only speak for England—in the records of which you will not find one or two Chancery suits—in fact, a large portion of most Charities has been eaten up by expensive litigations. After three years' labour in going from office to office, I was able to get up a scheme for the school at Stamfordham, and in that scheme the Charity Commissioners urged very strongly that one-half of the Trustees should be appointed by the Vestry. After very considerable remonstrance on my part I got that part of the scheme altered, and I succeeded in getting half the Trustees elected directly by the ratepayers. Moreover, the eight co-optative Governors were only to be elected for seven years. What has been the consequence? They did me the honour to elect me as Chairman; but I declined the honour, because I thought it would be better that the people should manage the school of their own village by the best men they could get in the immediate neighbourhood. A new school-house has been built, the average attendance is now between 60 and 70 instead of three, and all the original co-optative members have ceased to exist, I am sorry to say, some by death, and some, like myself, by retirement. How have they supplied the places of these co-optative members? Why, the elected members have caused their own elected members to become co-optative members, so that practically the whole management of the school is in the hands of the ratepayers. The co-optative members are only elected for seven years; there is no jobbery; there is a good school; the people take an interest in the property, and there is no reason to complain in any way of the management of the school. Now, Sir, I ask the House to do something to popularize the Charities in the City of Lichfield. There were originally 61 Charities in the City; but some of them have become absorbed or merged in other property, and the money has been made away with. Long leases have been granted in some cases, though I must give the Charity Commissioners credit for having now done away with the lease-for-lives' system. Mark me, although the whole of the City of Lichfield is interspersed with little plots of land belonging to Charities, I have not been able to find one plot let in allotments to the working people. The property is let generally at high rent, very frequently to connections of the Trustees. At this hour of the morning I will not detain the House longer. I only wish to take this opportunity of thanking the Charity Commissioners for the courtesy they exhibited in their correspondence. The direct issue is that the Commissioners are determined, as I believe, to adhere, in the case of Lowe's Charity, to that old and rotten system of co-optative Trustees and Governors electing themselves in the future, and of not allowing any direct representative to come from the ratepayers. The question is whether the ratepayers, for whose benefit this Charity has been left, shall have the charge of its management. Do you think for one moment that the money of many of these Charities would have been lost if the ratepayers had had the power of electing their own Trustees to watch the property? I beg to move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, every Scheme of the Charity Commissioners ought to provide for the majority of the Trustees or Managers being directly elected by the ratepayers in the locality to which the Charity extends."

DR. FOSTER (Chester): Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the Motion. I myself have had, during the last two or three years, a good deal of experience of the dissatisfaction that exists, especially in the rural districts, with the mode in which the Trustees of these Charities do their work. Only to-day I put to the right hon. Gentleman (Sir Lyon Playfair) a Question bearing on the same subject as the principle involved in this Motion. In Inkberrow, in the county of Worcester, we have a difficulty of this kind in regard to the Charities, on which I had hoped to get some information from the right hon. Gentleman. During the last three or four years the belief of the agricultural labourers of the county has been that the Trustees of these Charities have done their utmost to prevent the Allotments Extension Act being put into force; and their constant appeal has been not that these Charities should be taken wholly out of the hands of the present Trustees, but that the people should have some voice in the management of the Charities. That, I think, is a reasonable request, with which this House ought to have strong sympathy. If we are to place the agricultural labourers and people in general in a right position in reference to these Charities, we ought to give them some power in the management of the Charities. This question affects many towns besides Lichfield. In Birmingham we have a very rich endowment—the Grammar School. The practice of the Town Council appointing a certain number of the Trustees has been in force some years, and works well. It may not work so well in smaller towns, such as Lichfield; but the question I wish more especially to press on the attention of the House is not a question which refers to towns, but one which refers to rural districts. During the late Election it was my lot to speak in more than one county constituency in which the Trustees of Charities were taking an active part in the electoral campaign. I know that in more than one case the agricultural population were told that if they did not vote in a certain way the Christmas doles they were in the habit of receiving might not be forthcoming. This kind of intimidation is unworthy of anyone occupying the position of a public Trustee, and is a mean advantage to take of the agricultural labourers. But the agricultural population are awakening now to the knowledge that these Charities are their own property, and that they are only held in trust by these Trustees appointed by the Charity Commissioners. They feel strongly on this matter. When I have attended meetings in favour of an extension of the allotment system, I have found their minds imbued with so strong a suspicion of the way in which these Charities are managed, that one of the greatest difficulties is to get them to believe that these Trusts are ever managed honestly and well. Many Charities are managed honestly and well; but the agricultural mind is imbued with a very strong suspicion as to the management. Can we wonder at it, when there are many instances in which whole Charities have disappeared; other instances in which the money has been misapplied; and other instances in which Charity lands existed a few years ago, but have now become absorbed by some mysterious process, and are no longer a benefit to the labouring poor? The suspicion of which I have spoken rankles in the minds of the people; and I believe it would be wise on the part of this House to pass some Resolution such as this. The election of a certain number of representative men would restore the confidence of the population in the rural districts in the management of these Charity Trusts.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in the opinion of this House, every Scheme of the Charity Commissioners ought to provide for the majority of the Trustees or Managers being directly elected by the ratepayers in the locality to which the Charity extends."—(*Sir John Swinburne.*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir LYON PLAYFAIR) (Leeds, S.): I was not aware of this Motion coming on to-night, or I should have obtained information from the Charity Commissioners. I am one of the Commissioners, but my duties prevent me attending the meetings of the Commission. I must point out to the hon. Baronet that his object will not at all be obtained by this Resolution; his object is to defeat Lowe's Charity Scheme; but his Motion will not act on Lowe's Charity at all. The Motion is couched in such large terms that I am sure he is thinking of other Charities besides Lowe's. "In the opinion of this House every Scheme of the Charity Commissioners" ought to be framed in the way he suggests. That will refer to education schemes, and to many educational schemes such a provision is quite unsuitable. The desire is to get men of technical knowledge—men of particular knowledge—elected upon schemes for education. I do not think, therefore, for education, at all events, the Resolution the hon. Baronet proposes will, in the slightest degree, effect the purpose he has in view. If the hon. Baronet will allow the debate to be adjourned I will take care to find out all about Lowe's Charity, and see how far his views can be met. I can assure him that this Motion itself will not, in the least, meet this particular case.

CAPTAIN VERNEY (Bucks, N., Buckingham): I hope the hon. Member will not allow this debate to be adjourned. There is no matter upon which the agricultural population feel more keenly than upon this question; and I may say that it is one which is regarded as of the utmost importance in the constituency which I have the honour to represent. It is thought that these Charities should be managed by those whom they are intended to benefit, and should not be dealt with in the interest of the landowners. I can quote an instance in which a Charity has been left to a certain school in a parish; and the parson, who is the landowner of the whole of the parish, is one of the Trustees of the Charity. The Charity is £100 a-year, and practically you are paying that £100 a-year into the parson's pocket. If this money had not been left there would have been school rates or something else of that sort to be paid; and, the parson being the landowner of the whole parish, he would have had to pay it. You might as well give him the Charity to put in his own pocket. In point of fact, I think it is a swindle upon the poor people of the parish that these educational endowments should be dealt with so as to benefit the landowner. I think that this is a matter which ought to be pushed to a division, and we shall then see who are the men who are ready to stand by the labourers and who have their interests at heart.

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Nottingham, S.): I have had good opportunities for many years past of examining the schemes of the Charity Commissioners; and it seems to me as though they were anxious to give power to anybody and everybody rather than those best suited to exercise it. Some of their schemes are of the most fantastic character; and the management of them has been left in the hands of those who are least interested in undertaking them. Another thing which I have noticed in connection with these schemes is that the Trustee Boards have, in many cases, been so constituted that a large majority of the Trustees belong to one particular Party, or to one particular religious denomination; and I am obliged to say that that particular political Party has been the Conservative Party, and the religious denomination has been the Church of England. For my part, I am in favour of trusting to the representative principle in this matter. I think it would be very much better to trust the people than to place power in the hands of those who have no real interest in the administration of the Charities, and who are certainly not the best qualified to administer them. I would remind the House that in the Act which deals with these questions in Scotland there is a clause the principle of which is identical with the principle for which my hon. Friend the Member for Lichfield (Sir John Swinburne) is contending to-night. That clause renders it essential that a portion of the Trustees who are to be appointed under the Act shall be appointed by the Borough Boards of Scotland. I hope also that the time is soon coming when we shall have something like decentralization in regard to the Charity Commissioners, and when power will be given to the Local Authorities to construct these schemes, instead of their being entrusted to a body of men in London. I consider that with all their wisdom, and with all their good intentions, the Charity Commissioners must be unable to frame schemes which are good for all the particular places interested. I hope that we shall soon give a larger measure of power to Local Authorities; and in respect of these Charities I hope it will lead to this—that instead of the reformation of the Charities being the tardy process it is at present, we shall be able carefully, and in good time, to reconstruct the whole of the charitable schemes of the country, and to do it in such a way as to meet the wants of the people to a far greater extent than they had been met during the last 50 years.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I hope that the hon. Member will press this question to a division. As my hon. Friend has stated, it is not a new question in this House, and it is not a new question in one part of the Kingdom. We know a good deal about it in Scotland; and I would point out that this Motion which the hon. Baronet has put upon the Paper contains the very identical principle which we contended for on behalf of Scotland in the last Parliament. We contended, when the Scotch Act was before the House, for a clause which should take the form of the Motion now put forward by the hon. Baronet, and that clause was put into the Bill; but when the measure went up to "another place" it was considerably altered, and eventually passed in a much weaker form. Therefore, I think that in future, whenever this question is brought forward, it will be considered of the greatest importance that this principle should be once more affirmed, and that on this occasion the bulk of the independent Members will support the hon. Baronet in a division upon the matter.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I do not know how far hon. Members are aware that there is a Committee sitting upstairs engaged in investigating the whole of this subject; but it appears to me that it would be a bad precedent to establish to appoint a Committee one day, and then, almost directly after having done so, to pass a Resolution in this House practically deciding the whole question. I am of opinion, also, that this matter cannot be properly discussed at this hour. It is now a quarter past 1 o'clock in the morning, and I do not think that so important a question as this can be satisfactorily dealt with at such an hour, and in the absence of so many Members. I venture to say, moreover, that if the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite (Captain Verney) had a seat on the Committee upstairs he would not have made use of the observations he did in regard to the Commissioners. I do not believe that anybody who knows anything about these cases can describe them as being "fantastic schemes." I have known something of these schemes from the commencement of the Committee, and I venture to say that the term "fantastic" is the very worst that can be applied to them. They have ever shown an increasing desire to have regard to local requirements, and an anxiety to give effect to the wants and desires of every district interested. The system proposed in this Motion will be an entirely novel system in this country—a system which has never yet been brought into operation, and which, if it is brought into operation, will not be founded on the Report of any Committee or Commission, will not be supported by evidence of any kind, but will be a complete revolution in our educational system carried by an unexpected vote in this House at half-past 1 o'clock in the morning. I do not believe that there was ever a Committee of this House which was stronger or better attended than the Committee which is inquiring into this matter; and I do not think that the House will be acting in that judicial spirit, and with that desire to act fairly, which is looked forward to in all our Parliamentary proceedings, if it consents to pass this Motion. For my part, I believe that the action of the Charity Commission was justified by the Report of the Committee which sat last year. I confess that I have heard from some friends of mine that there are some grounds of complaint in regard to some of these Charities in reference to allotments; but I believe that the fault in those cases does not lie with the Commissioners, but with the people living in the districts concerned. I am sure, however, that more weight ought to be attached to the Report of last year's Committee, which was made after careful investigation, than to the opinions of hon. Members who, however sincere, have not had the same practical acquaintance with the facts of the case. What we have to do is to have regard to the present administration of the Charities, and not to what took place in 1832. At present the Charity Commissioners cannot deal with any Charity unless they are moved to do so, and the question of whether their powers ought to be enlarged has often been spoken of. It has been said that their powers ought to be enlarged; but that matter is not before the House at the present moment. It is a different question, and, therefore, I will not now go into it. What I would urge upon the hon. Baronet opposite (Sir John Swinburne) is this—that, having regard to the fact that these matters are being inquired into upstairs, a Motion so large and sweeping in its character as this ought not to be pressed at this hour of the morning.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I would point out to the hon. Baronet (Sir John Swinburne) who has moved this Resolution that there are a great many Members who are interested in this question absent on this occasion; indeed, I may say that very few of those now in the House ever expected so important a matter as this, which does involve very serious considerations, to come on at such a late hour. Now, what are the facts of the case? It has been the custom in all the schemes in connection with Endowed Charities to provide in different ways for the election of Trustees. In some cases the Trustees are elected by the Governing Bodies, while others are sometimes appointed by special persons having an interest in the Trust. The proposal of my hon. Friend is this—that in every case of a Trust, and whether or not for any particular purpose, the majority of the Trustees shall be chosen by election by the ratepayers. That is to say, that there shall be an election taken part in by the whole body of the electors of the district interested in the case of every Trust. The rule has been hitherto, and I believe it has been applied to the majority of Trusts, that a proportion of the Trustees shall be elected by the Local Authorities, and that has always been supposed to raise the local question; but my hon. Friend proposes to do away with this altogether. Well, that is a strong proposition to lay down as an absolute rule, and to ask the House to adopt it at 1 o'clock in the morning; and, therefore, I will appeal to the hon. Baronet not to press his Motion at this hour in the morning. Surely so large a proposal as this ought not to be adopted at half-past 1 o'clock in the morning. There is a stronger reason—namely, that this very question has been referred to a Select Committee upstairs, which is sitting at this moment. That Committee is inquiring into these Endowed Charities, and the question we are now discussing, I am told, is under the consideration of the Committee. The hon. Baronet actually proposes that we should take a division on a subject which is referred, as I say, to a Select Committee—a very strong Committee—sitting upstairs. He would say to that Committee—"We will take the matter of these Trusts out of your hands, notwithstanding that we have referred it to you, and we will lay down such-and-such a doctrine." I venture to say that that would be a proceeding unexampled in the history of our dealings in these matters. Let me remind the hon. Gentleman of the question underlying this. Take a majority of, say, seven Trustees who would be elected by popular election. In order to keep up that number, most probably it would be necessary for an election to take place every year, because you may take it for granted that, having seven gentlemen filling these offices, one vacancy will occur, on an average, every 12 months. And does the hon. Member reflect upon what the cost of these elections is? We have had a Return showing the expense to the ratepayers of local elections carried on in the ordinary way, and from that Return it would be safe to say that in a small town the expense would be £200 or £300. Every 1*d.* of that would come out of the funds of the Charity. I do trust the hon. Baronet will not press his Motion to a division, but will postpone it in order to allow time for consultation with those interested.

Sir R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): After what has just fallen from the right hon. Gentleman, I should like to say that there is no doubt the passing of a Resolution of this kind after a full debate would have great weight with the country, but that a Resolution of the House, whichever way it might go, passed without debate would have no effect, practically, either in the country or elsewhere. I am not going to follow hon. Gentlemen in the argument as to whether the proposition before us is right or wrong; but I would say that, at this time of night, in the middle of such a debate as we are engaged in, and looking at the state of the Benches, it is impossible for the House to come to a Resolution which would have any effect. Therefore, with all sincerity, I would say to the hon. Baronet who has brought the question forward that he should introduce it at a time when it could be fairly discussed, in a full House—for it is a subject that deserves discussion, and which I am sure will receive it. I cannot omit to refer to the other circumstance, that this very question is being considered upstairs at this moment. For this House to pass a Resolution on the subject whilst the Committee is sitting, and before it has reported, would be looked upon by everyone who is familiar with the Forms of the House as a most extraordinary thing, and as coming to a conclusion without sufficient knowledge and information. Of course, on this matter I am only expressing my own opinion, and not that of right hon. Gentlemen opposite. [Sir John Swinburne dissented.] The hon. Baronet shakes his head, but I think I have a right to put this proposition before the House. I believe it is one that will be accepted by the country.

Mr. KENRICK (Birmingham, N.): I do not concur in what the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary said, that Town Councils are not to be trusted with the conduct of these schools. Town Councils are the elected representatives of the people, and as elected representatives I believe they are, at any rate in most cases, the most competent authorities to entrust with the management of the schools. I speak on this subject with some knowledge of one school—the Grammar School in Birmingham—to which the Town Council appoints eight representatives out of a total number of 21. The result of the addition of representative Governors on that Board has been to infuse considerable energy into the management with the best results. I simply rose to support the Motion as a declaration in favour of the representative principle. I believe that to be the sound principle on which all these Charities and public Institutions are to be carried on; and it is looking on the Resolution in that light that I venture to recommend it to the support of the House. I should like to say that this is not a Bill. The Government at this time are asking us to vote on a question of supreme importance, and they will take the vote not as committing the House to all the particulars of the measure, but simply as a declaration of principle. That being the case on a matter of great Constitutional importance, surely on a minor matter such as this we need not quarrel too much as to the terms of the Resolution. It would be distinctly understood in the country, as in the House, simply as the affirmation of a principle; and that principle I take to be a sound one, and one it is the duty of the House to recognize, and put in force on every occasion when the opportunity arises.

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE: In reply to hon. Members, I would say that the Motion has been on the Orders of the Day for six weeks, and that, therefore, it cannot possibly have taken Her Majesty's Government by surprise. This evening, when the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister asked the House to give way for the Irish debate, I distinctly rose in my place, and requested the Government to give me all the facilities they could for this Motion of mine to come on at an early hour. I think that will be in the recollection of the House. Then I have been asked to postpone this Motion, because there is a Committee sitting upon the subject upstairs—because there is an inquiry going on. Why, Sir, there has been an inquiry going on about these things for 64 years, having commenced in 1822. I take a practical view of these matters. I have a practical knowledge of them, acquired by eight years' experience, having had under my own eye an Endowed School managed by a majority of Trustees or Governors—call them what you like—elected by the ratepayers directly. We have heard from the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary something about the enormous expense of these elections. He says they cost hundreds of pounds. Well, in the case to which I refer, the elections take place once every one or two years, and they cost the Trustees nothing. They hold their meetings in the school-house. I agree with my hon. Friend on my right the Member for North Birmingham (Mr. Kenrick) that in such places as Manchester, Birmingham, and Liverpool, Town Councils are excellent Institutions for the nomination of Governors in such Municipalities; but when you get to small towns and villages—and even the residence of a Bishop does not necessarily render a town a very large or important place—the case is different. I want to put myself right. The Committee sitting upstairs has been mentioned more than once. I have been in constant communication with the Chief Charity Commissioner upstairs, and I have begged him to postpone the carrying out of the Lowe's Charity Scheme, seeing that we are at issue as to the system of election to be adopted. I desire the Trustees to be elected by the ratepayers. This Gentleman declines to agree to my proposal; he carries his point and his scheme. The House may not be aware of the fact, nor was I until within the last few days; but it is not necessary for the scheme of a Charity to be placed upon the Table of this House. If it is an Endowed School the scheme has to lie upon the Table of the House 30 days; but that is not the case with other Charities. What happens in this case? Let us look on it from a practical point of view. Lowe's Scheme has only been passed 14 days or three weeks; the Charity Commissioners are already, under this new scheme, selling a piece of land in the middle of the town, where a garden is wanted for allotments, against the wish of the working classes. They have written to me to say that they have had the land valued. I do not know whether it is proposed to sell it at its full value, or at less than its value; but the land is being sold against the wish of the working classes for whom the Charity was left. What I want in this matter is Home Rule; that Charity property shall be watched from day to day by those to whom it belongs. The Trustees and Governors in this case are to be elected for life. In the case of the Charity with which I became connected eight years ago, and which has been working so admirably, the Trustees are only elected for seven years. Under these circumstances, I feel compelled to divide the House.

Lord FRANCIS HERVEY (Bury St. Edmunds): I desire to put before the House a consideration which may weigh with it in the decision it may give. The Motion of the hon. Baronet appears to be based upon the idea that all points that can come within the jurisdiction of the Charity Commissioners must be in their character essentially local. ["No, no!"] Well, I will read the Resolution, or that part of it which is essential. The hon. Baronet asks us to affirm that in the opinion of this House—

> "Every Scheme of the Charity Commissioners ought to provide for the majority of the Trustees or Managers being directly elected by the ratepayers in the locality to which the Charity extends."

Take the case of the Institution for the benefit of the Orphans of Seamen. That is not a local Charity. It is a Charity for the benefit of a class, and I apprehend that the Resolution proposed for the acceptance of the House in that case would be altogether out of place. That is by no means a rare state of things, nor is it rare to find cases where Charities have a strong local element, and, at the same time, also a strong non-local character. It would be absurd to insist upon a majority of the Trustees of a Charity being local, because that Charity may have local characteristics. Take a case like Sherborne School. Suppose the Commissioners are going to form a scheme for that school, and the majority of the Trustees are to be withdrawn from the narrow radius of Sherborne and the vicinity. The school is a public school, open to all Her Majesty's subjects who like to send their children there. ["Divide!"] Hon. Gentlemen say "Divide!" Are they not beginning to see that the Resolution proposed to the House is one which they cannot pass without agreeing to that which is not sense? The Resolution is one which should not be acted upon, and which the hon. Baronet would be the last man in the world to wish to have acted upon. The hon. Member opposite has mentioned that he has had great experience as to the Endowed Schools Department of the Charity Commissioners' work, and has found considerable fault with the Charity Commissioners. A Committee is sitting upstairs to inquire into complaints made against the administration of the Charity Commissioners with respect to Endowed Schools; and I would put it to the hon. Gentleman that he would be doing better by coming up to that Committee to substantiate the complaints he has made, than by merely standing up in this House and making a wide and general and vague case. ["Oh, oh!"] He certainly said there were a great many cases, but he did not give us any particulars. It would be better, I say, to go to the Committee upstairs, than to indulge in general declamation against the Charity Commissioners.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): I quite agree with the object the hon. Baronet has in view, and when the right time comes, and we are able to deal practically with the question, I will go with him with all my heart. Many Members in the House know that I have fought the question on the lines the hon. Gentleman proposes; but there is some regard to be paid to the fact that there is a Committee now sitting upstairs to inquire into the matter. I, too, am a Member of that Committee. It is submitted that it would be impossible for a general Resolution of this kind to cover many of the schemes which would be effected by it if it were passed—that it would be inappropriate to many of them. But the weightiest point is that we have not in the districts where these Charities exist Representative Bodies into whose hands the management of these matters could be committed. The hon. Gentleman has just called attention to a Charity in a district where the annual election of Trustees would cost £300. It is all very well to say that elections ought to be conducted more economically; but, as a matter of fact, wherever they do take place we know that they are very expensive. I think this point will be met by the decision of the Committee; but, whatever their decision may be, I think that by waiting for that decision we shall be much better able to deal with this question as a whole.

MR. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): While I agree entirely with the principle that is involved in this Resolution, I rise to support the view that has been taken by my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. Illingworth). I, for one, agree with my hon. Friend in pressing the view that we should not vote for this Resolution at this time. I hope the time is not far distant when we shall have a system of local government in this country under which the Charities of the country can be put. Charities would then be dealt with locally. But I think that, under the circumstances described by my hon. Friend, it would be, on the whole, a mistake for us to vote for this Resolution at this time. It seems to me I shall best consult the views of those who are divided in opinion on this matter by moving the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. James Stuart.*)

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. D. ACLAND) (Cornwall, Launceston): I would make one more appeal to the hon. Baronet not to put the Government in the position of opposing the principle of the Motion that is brought forward. Speaking for myself entirely—though, perhaps, I might say the same thing on behalf of the Government also—I may say there are two or three schemes I have had to deal with myself to which it would be impossible to apply this Motion.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): As a point of Order, I would draw attention to the fact that the Question before the House is the adjournment of the debate.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not in Order in discussing the Main Question. The Question is the adjournment of the debate.

MR. C. T. D. ACLAND: As one not opposed to the spirit of the Resolution, I ask the hon. Baronet for myself—as a private Member—not to press the Resolution to a division.

Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 59; Noes 73: Majority 14.—(Div. List, No. 97.)

Original Question again proposed.

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) rose.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I rise to a point of Order. I wish to ask you, Sir, whether, as you had already put the Question that "the Ayes have it," the hon. Gentleman has a right to continue the debate? Is it competent for any hon. Gentleman to speak on the general question after the Question has been put?

MR. SPEAKER: If I had completed putting the Question, and had declared that the Ayes or the Noes had it, it would be too late for any hon. Member to continue the debate upon the general question. But all that I had said was—"Those who are of that opinion say 'aye,' and those who are of the contrary opinion say 'no;'" and it was not then too late for the hon. Member to interpose.

MR. COURTNEY: At this late hour I do not propose to detain the House. I rise simply for the purpose of appealing to the hon. Baronet, in view of the fact that he has just obtained a majority on the Motion for Adjournment, which is a very significant intimation of the feeling of the House, he should consent now to withdraw the Motion, and not press it to a division. The hon. Baronet is aware that a Select Committee is now sitting upstairs which is engaged in the consideration of the whole matter. He wishes to lay down in his Resolution a principle as to which I will say nothing—that the majority of the Trustees or Managers of every Charity should be elected by ratepayers locally interested in the scheme. But there are Charities in regard to which that principle could not be adhered to. There are Charities concerned with particular localities; other Charities concerning particular classes of persons. Take the case of a Charity like Christ's Hospital. If the proposal of the hon. Baronet were accepted, any scheme drawn up for the regulation of Christ's Hospital would require that the majority of the Trustees or Managers of the Hospital should be elected by the ratepayers of Christ Church, Newgate. A more preposterous conclusion could not be arrived at. In some cases these Charities concern particular localities, in others particular professions, in others different kinds of education, and in others different families. If the hon. Baronet desires to grapple with the whole subject he must draw up a much wider Resolution. But the more important point is that we already have a Select Committee upstairs considering the whole matter; and I certainly think that to pass a Resolution of this sort at 10 minutes to 2 o'clock in the morning upon a question which has already been referred to a Committee selected from your own Body, with instructions to report to the House upon it, is most inexpedient. I trust that the hon. Baronet will be satisfied with the victory he has just gained upon the Motion for Adjournment of the House, which, no doubt, is highly significant, and cannot be lost sight of; and that he will now be prepared to study the dignity of the House and the position which it already occupies in regard to the question. In my opinion, he may lose much, and can gain nothing, by persisting with the Resolution.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I do not attach much value to the argument of the hon. Member as to the dignity of the House. The hon. Member is very fond of referring to the dignity of the House. Only the other day he informed us that it would be contrary to the dignity of the House not to consent to the confiscation of a common on Hayling Island; and now he tells us that it is against the dignity of the House that we should stand up for the rights of the poor. I strongly support this Resolution; and I would ask my hon. Friend the Member for the Lichfield Division of Staffordshire (Sir John Swinburne) not to give way. I do so for this reason—that if we pass the Resolution we shall strengthen the hands of the Committee sitting upstairs. Although my experience of this House has not been very long, I know very well, from what has taken place in former

Parliaments, that the passing of an abstract Resolution such as this very often produces a most salutary moral effect. I am perfectly certain that the Committee now sitting upstairs would be stirred up by it to do its duty, especially if the Resolution is passed by a majority equal to that which just refused to allow the debate to be adjourned. I do not think the case of Christ's Hospital was a very good one for the Chairman of Committees to cite; because everyone knows that, if ever there was a case in which the poor have been robbed of their rights, it is that of Christ's Hospital. The course which has been pursued by the Trustees in reference to Christ's Hospital has certainly not been such as to entitle them to the confidence of the public. We have heard of instances in which noble Lords have been pitchforked into the Charity Commission in order to find comfortable berths for them, and without the slightest regard for their fitness to discharge the duties. It is most desirable, I think, that there should be the utmost publicity in regard to these schemes; but at the present moment, under the present system, it is impossible to find out what is going on. That being the condition under which these schemes are concocted, I can well understand why objections should be raised to them, and serious complaints made on the part of the localities which are interested in them.

Original Question put.

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this House, every Scheme of the Charity Commissioners ought to provide for the majority of the Trustees or Managers being directly elected by the ratepayers in the locality to which the Charity extends.

COAL MINES REGULATION BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.), in moving for leave to bring in a Bill for the Regulation of Coal Mines, said, that at that hour of the morning (2 o'clock) the House would scarcely desire that he should enter into a lengthened explanation of the provisions of the Bill. He would, therefore, simply state that the object of the Bill was simply to consolidate the laws already in existence relating to the regulation of coal mines, and also to carry out some of the recommendations of the Royal Commission which sat recently upon the subject, most of which met with the approval of the miners themselves.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill for the Regulation of Coal Mines."—(*Mr. Secretary Childers.*)

SIR R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton) expressed a hope that the Bill would be in the hands of Members as soon as possible. He would like to know whether the Bill dealt with all the recommendations of the Commissioners?

MR. CHILDERS: The Bill, which will be in the hands of hon. Members in the course of a day or two, deals with the recommendations of the Commissioners.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I hope the right hon. Gentleman will not fix the second reading for too early a day, so that hon. Members may have a proper opportunity for considering the nature of the provisions included in the Bill.

MR. CHILDERS: After the Bill is in the hands of hon. Members I propose to give a full explanation of the nature of its provisions.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Secretary CHILDERS and Mr. BROADHURST.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 217.]

ULSTER CANAL AND TYRONE NAVIGATION BILL.—[BILL 141.]

(*Mr. John Morley, Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

NOMINATION OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That Mr. Henry H. Fowler be a Member of the Committee."—(*Mr. Arnold Morley.*)

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): Sir, I rise to ask that this Motion may be postponed. This is a Committee with respect to which there are strong opinions, for and against, amongst the Party with whom I act. I observe that there are upon the Committee, nominated by the House, four Members who are in favour of the Bill, and one against it. I observe, also, that it is intended to appoint four more Members through the Committee of Selection, and I think it only fair that we should wait to see whom the Committee of Selection will appoint. If it is proposed to appoint four Members from the North of Ireland, in addition to those already on the Committee, I cannot think that its composition would be a fair one. It would, I think, be in the interest of all parties to postpone the debate, until we see what names are intended to be brought forward.

MR. SEXTON (Sligo, S.): I think that the Committee of Selection should simply name four Gentlemen, and that the Government should postpone the debate until Monday next.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Arnold Morley.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *Monday* next.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

——o——

CONVEYANCING (SCOTLAND) ACT (1874) AMENDMENT BILL.—[BILL 127.]

(*Dr. Cameron, Mr. Craig Sellar, Mr. Donald Crawford, Mr. Lyell.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): Sir, I rise to move the second reading of this Bill; and before doing so I wish to make a short explanation of its principles. The object of the Bill is to rectify what, in my opinion, is a most gross injustice that is operating in Scotland. As hon. Members from Scotland know the tenure of land in Scotland is peculiar. If the heir succeeds to property he is entitled to pay the superior one year's feu duty; but if any person other than the heir succeeds he has to pay the superior a year's rent. Previous to 1874 the heir would enter, and the superior would only be entitled to one year's feu duty; but owing to an expression in the Act it has been held that the Trustees may enter, and in consequence of their entry they are obliged to pay an entire year's rent. I may illustrate this by referring to the case of a gentleman who used to be a Member of this House. Property had been left to trustees in pursuance of a family arrangement, and the gentleman I speak of said that, if this Act had not been passed, as heir he would have been entitled to pay a feu duty of £2, but that, the Act having been passed, his Trustees had been obliged to pay, or might be obliged to pay, a year's rent, amounting to several thousand pounds, and that when the property passes to the next heir the year's rental will again have to be paid. Now, this could not have been the intention of the Act; and some of the Scotch Judges most concerned in its passing are of that opinion. The Act provided expressly that nothing contained in it should alter any relations between the superior and the vassals. But it was held that such was the effect of the Act, and it is in order to rectify that anomaly that this Bill is introduced. It has been objected that the Bill, in its present form, will not effect that object. We are most anxious that any form of drafting may be adopted that will accomplish the end in view. I may mention that before Easter, when the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate expressed some intention of looking into the matter to see whether he could arrange to carry out the intention of the Bill, I willingly postponed it, and would with equal willingness have withdrawn it, if I could have perceived the slightest intention to take the matter in hand. I understand that the right hon. and learned Gentleman holds that, prior to the passing of the Act of 1874, superiors had the right to these casualties, although they could not enforce it. Well, as a matter of fact, they never have enforced it; there are no cases recorded in which the right was enforced. Under the circumstances, whatever may be the theoretical view of the case, we are in equity bound to say that a gross injustice, such as I have described, ought not to be allowed to be effected by the wording of the Act of 1874, and for that reason I bring forward this Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Dr. Cameron.*)

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Bute): Sir, this is a Bill which professes to effect an alteration in the law, which would bring back to their previous state and condition matters that have been arranged by the Act of 1874. It is a moot point among lawyers whether there has been any increment of the rights of superiors caused by the Act of 1874; and the hon. Gentleman the Member for the College Division of Glasgow is, perhaps, aware that one of the Judges has asserted that there is no addition to the rights of superior caused by that Act. But my objection is that the Bill, which consists of two clauses, is such as to provide no effective remedy whatever; it merely asserts that the Act of 1874 is to add nothing to the rights of superiors. The defect of the Bill appears to me to be that it contains one general proposition and leaves the Courts of Law to work out what is merely an expression of hope or abstract idea with regard to the future. It is not sufficient to say there is something which needs a remedy without stating what the remedy is to be. I do not see anything in the Bill scientific or practical to remedy the evil which is in itself doubtful. At the same time, I am bound to say that in the case of Trusts a difficulty has been created which ought not to have arisen, and if the hon. Gentleman confines his efforts to such specific case, he will then be keeping in the region of practical measures. At present I do not think he is within those limits, and for that reason I do not think the House will do well to assent to the second reading of the Bill. I do not think the measure would confer the smallest benefit upon any but persons of the Profession to which I have the honour to belong, inasmuch as it will, in my opinion, create other difficulties and a fresh crop of problems which it will be most difficult to settle.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): Sir, I am not going to enter into the details of this subject, which I must say is a highly technical one. But I agree that, while it is doubtful whether the Conveyancing Act of 1874 produces any alteration or not in the right of superiors, I am rather inclined to think that it has produced a practical alteration which has operated hardly in some cases. There is no doubt that there have been some exceptionally hard cases. I had hoped to be able to place my views with regard to the subject in the form of a Bill providing machinery that would carry them into effect — because I entirely agree with the hon. and learned Gentleman who has just spoken, that the Bill as it stands is absolutely useless in that respect, and I doubt whether it would have any effect at all. The Bill declares that a highly technical Statute shall have in a certain respect no more effect than if it had never been passed. Although I sympathize with the object of my hon. Friend, and have told him that I have been into the matter, and that one of the Legal Bodies has reported on it, I think that we might, with advantage, assent to a further postponement. If we find, as I think we have found, that there are two points which require to be dealt with, one relating to the cases where there are Trustees and the other where there are no Trustees—points which are perfectly distinct—I do not think we can do otherwise than deal with them in a specific Bill. But I hope my hon. Friend will not press this matter now, after the indication I have already given of my hope to put it before the House in an appropriate form.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I suggest to the hon. Member for Glasgow the consideration that he would not be promoting the end he has in view by pressing this Bill now. I think it a very significant fact that while we have on the back of the Bill the names of Gentlemen who are not lawyers, we have also the names of two hon. and learned Gentlemen—Members for Glasgow—neither of whom has thought proper to stand up here and defend it. At that I am not at all surprised, and I am sure that no one acquainted with the Act of 1874 will be in the least surprised at it. After what has been said by the Lord Advocate, I trust that the matter will not be pressed. With the main clause of the Bill I confess that I cannot agree, and we cannot possibly agree to the second reading of the measure in its present shape.

Mr. HALDANE (Haddington): Sir, I think that an altogether undue amount of criticism has been levelled at this Bill. So far from its being unintelligible, I regard the Bill as intelligible in every respect. I must say that I cannot understand the last clause, which I think should be struck out, as being inconsistent with the spirit of the earlier Act, although it makes not the smallest difference so far as the principle of the Bill is concerned. The Bill is to give statutory effect to the opinion expressed by Earl Cairns and Lord Blackburn in the House of Lords in the case in which the very point dealt with in this Bill arose. It is a very important one. The Act provides that superiors are not to be entitled to casualties sooner than they would have been under the old state of the law, the intention being to prevent superiors receiving larger sums than would have been paid under the old practice—a practice which, according to the opinion of certain Judges, was neither "dishonest nor deserving of reprobation." Now, the Act of 1874 omitted to provide, contrary to the intention of Parliament, that the superior should not have larger casualties than he had under the old law. Well, Sir, this Bill provides, almost in the very words which both Earl Cairns and Lord Blackburn used, that the *lacuna* in the Act of 1874 should be filled up; it provides that, from and after the passing of this Act, nothing contained in the Conveyancing Act of 1874 shall operate so as to give to superiors a right to any other or larger casualties than they could have exacted if the Act had not been passed; in other words, it enacts that the intention of the Act is not to give the superior the right to larger casualties than there would have been under the old law. The point is a very simple one, and the Bill does no more than make the words of the Judges, used in the case I have referred to, law. I think the object of the Bill is a good one, and shall cordially support the Motion of my hon. Friend.

Dr. CAMERON: Sir, I have listened attentively to the arguments used by hon. and learned Gentlemen against the Bill, and in favour of postponement, but I feel it my duty to divide the House on the present Motion. I cannot consent to further delay now, because the Bill in its present form was before the House last Session—12 months ago.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 55; Noes 28: Majority 27.—(Div. List, No. 98.)

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS (IMPROVEMENT EXPENSES) (*re-committed*) BILL.

(*Mr. Dodds, Sir Edward Reed, Mr. Arnold Morley, Mr. William Cook, Mr. Bullard.*)

[BILL 153.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Mr. Haldane

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power to amend section 156 of 'The Public Health Act, 1875,' by extending its provisions to the erection of buildings in streets."—(*Captain Cotton.*)

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): Sir, I presume that the passing of this Instruction does not bind the House to the principle contained in it?

Mr. SPEAKER: It is only an Instruction to enable the Committee to deal with the clause of the Act of 1875.

Motion *agreed to.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*Mr. William Cook.*)

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): Sir, I rise to protest against the Committee stage of the Bill being taken now. I contend that it is a Bill involving matter of too important a character to be taken at this late hour. I have no reason to complain of the manner in which I have been met hitherto with regard to the Bill, but, on the contrary, acknowledge the courtesy which I have received. On the Motion for the second reading I made several suggestions, almost the whole of which were accepted by the hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill. But the clause which it is now proposed to introduce is one which has been the subject of much discussion, and therefore I feel it my duty to protest against the Motion of the hon. Gentleman opposite.

Mr. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): Sir, I would point out that there is no intention to go into the details of the Bill, and that the Committee stage is simply proposed to be taken *pro formâ.*

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Tuesday* next.

MOTIONS.

—o—

GAS PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Charles Acland, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under "The Gas and Water Works Facilities Act, 1870," relating to Abingdon Gas, Caterham and District Gas, Hoddesdon Gas, Honley Gas, Horley District Gas, and Langley Mill and Heanor Gas, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Charles Acland and Mr. Mundella.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 214.]

FRESHWATER FISHERIES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Mundella, Bill to amend the Law relating to Freshwater Fisheries, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Mundella and Mr. Acland.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 218.]

House adjourned at half after Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 19*th May*, 1886.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*Ordered — First Reading*—Barristers at Law and Advocates (Fees) * [219]; Distress for Rent Amendment * [220].

Second Reading — Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) [5]; Parliamentary Voters Registration [100], *further proceeding adjourned.*

Second Reading—Referred to Select Committee—Railway Regulation [97].

Select Committee — Post Office Sites * [148], *nominated.*

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

DUNDALK GAS BILL.

CONSIDERATION.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): In consequence of the opposition to this Bill, I would suggest that the third reading be postponed for a few days, in order to give the Irish Members, who are very much interested in the measure, an opportunity of considering its provisions.

MR. SPEAKER: The Bill, if opposed, will stand over until to-morrow.

Bill, as amended, to be considered *To-morrow.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

POOR LAW GUARDIANS (IRELAND) BILL.—[BILL 5.]

(*Mr. Edward Harrington, Mr. Edmond Dwyer Gray, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Timothy Healy, Mr. Jordan.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. E. HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, he would not go through the stereotyped formula of claiming the indulgence of the House in addressing it for the first time; but he felt, at the same time, that the House would be indulgent to any shortcomings which he might display. This Bill, the second reading of which he now proposed, extended merely to Ireland, for the simple and plain reason that it principally concerned Ireland, and also that its necessity existed in Ireland more than elsewhere. The salient features of the Bill were—first, that in future in elections in the Poor Law in Ireland to the position of Guardian there should be voting by Ballot; second, that in these elections there should be no voting by proxy; and, third, that there should be a better balancing of the representation of property by the reduction of the number of *ex officios* who were at present entitled to sit on these Poor Law Boards. At present the number of *ex officio* Guardians entitled to sit on the Boards equalled the number of Guardians elected by the ratepayers; and when it would be remembered that, in addition to this privilege, there was in Ireland a scheme of voting in Poor Law matters according to the amount of property held by those entitled to vote, it would be seen that property had an undue and overwhelming preponderance in the Boards of Guardians as at present constituted. In the proposal they were now making the Irish Party were not asking the House to affirm any new principle. They were not going in for any of those radical changes and wild notions which were now so readily ascribed to them. They were merely asking the Legislature to revert to the better wisdom which it exhibited in a former time. He had in his hand an Act passed in the first and second years of the Reign of Her present Majesty, and he found that in that Act the number of *ex officio* Guardians in Ireland was limited to one-third of the elected Guardians, and one-fourth of the whole Board. This Act was, unfortunately, repealed 10 years afterwards, and the number of *ex officios* raised from one-fourth to one-half of the whole Board in Ireland, while in England, he believed, the old custom of limiting the *ex officios* to one-fourth of the whole Board was still maintained. To better balance the representation of property at the present time, they proposed, not that there should be one man one vote, but that each man should be entitled to vote according to the amount of property he represented, and that the *ex officio* representation of property should be reduced to the limit of one-third of the elected representation. If, as hon. Members above the Gangway from Ireland said, property and intelligence go together, and loyalty was a natural concomitant of both, then he thought that under this system these things received their due, and even more than their due, share of representation. The backbone and essence of the measure, however, was the principle of vote by Ballot. The tendency of the age, under every system of representation where it was possible to adopt it, was in that direction. The system at present in Ireland with regard to voting for Poor Law Guardians was a sort of "free-and-easy, go-as-you-please" arrangement. A policeman took around a bundle of voting papers to the houses of the different ratepayers, and sometimes he would leave them at one house and tell a youngster to deliver them to the neighbours. It was not this irregularity, however, that was the danger to the system of representation. The danger lay in the fact that the policeman was followed in his rounds by a number of harpies representing, it might be said, both sides, and the moment the voting paper was delivered it was pounced upon either by a smart bailiff on the part of the landlord, or an equally smart boy on the part of the National League, and filled up by either of them. He would ask the House whether it was decent—whether it was in the interest of the growth of a system of real Constitutionalism—that such a state of things should continue to exist? Another feature of the matter was that the majority of the Clerks of the Unions, who were the Returning Officers in these elections, were the creatures of a certain Party, and it was only a natural consequence of men's present imperfect human nature, even in the 19th century, that a person should favour those gentlemen who gave him his position. Now, in this Bill they did not seek to influence the Returning Officers to one side or another. They merely wished to make it impossible that they could be so influenced. This Bill had an interesting history. It was in a small way, in miniature, a reflection of Irish history. The Bill had been before the House several times. It passed through the House in the Autumn Session of 1884, and where did it go? It went to that mystic region with the symbolic name called "the other place." There was an infernal suggestion about the words "the other place." Well, "the other place" sent it to "another place." It was referred by "the other place" to a Select Committee. This was the traditional policy of the House of Lords regarding Bills dealing with justice to the masses of Irish people, and he might add, indeed, with regard to the masses of English people as well. The House of Lords dealt with Irish Bills by what he might call a political system of baby-farming. They sent out Irish Bills to such baby-farmers as Select Committees, and kept them there until by dint of nursing they killed them. He had in his hand a big volume containing a Report of Evidence of the Select Committee of the Lords on this Bill. He honestly confessed he did not bewilder himself by reading it. It did not in the slightest affect the matter now before the House. The House had already affirmed the principle of the Bill, and he presumed it would do so again today. One would imagine that, instead of dealing with the question of the Poor Law in Ireland, the Lords' Committee was investigating something concerning Woolwich, something concerning an arsenal, or the Soudan Campaign, so great was the number of captains, majors, and colonels examined before it. In the Poor Law system in Ireland, from the Local Government Board down to the most minor grades, the whole system was saturated with the presence of those dilapidated, disused, and misplaced military men, whose military ardour only found vent in thwarting all the efforts of the people to get themselves properly represented on these Boards. They had gallant colonels, gallant majors, and, of course, equally gallant captains. In fact, they reminded him of a facetious poet who wrote—

> "Captains who never yet in battle
> Wielded pistol, sword, or wattel."

One of those gallant colonels—the hon. Member for the Isle of Thanet (Colonel

King-Harman)—had given Notice to read this Bill six months hence; he presumed he meant six centuries hence. [Colonel KING-HARMAN: Hear, hear!] "Hear, hear!" said the gallant Colonel. Well, all he could say was that there was not in the world a country more becoloneled, be-majored, and be-militiamanned than Ireland, and yet Ireland was to have an Arms Act to prevent the people from carrying arms, and he supposed before long even rotten eggs would be proclaimed. These military men might be wonderful at military tactics, and have great military experience, and have distinguished themselves somewhere, though as a humble student of history he had not been able to discover where. The hon. and gallant Member was no doubt consistent in his Motion, and he was the consistent opponent to popular representation in the Union of which he was Chairman. Only the other day an honest Englishman who visited the Union told how a certain person deprived a certain people of a certain quantity of turf because they had the audacity to oppose a certain nominee of a certain hon. and gallant Colonel.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: And he was flatly contradicted.

MR. E. HARRINGTON said, he would prefer to see a man contradicted intelligently instead of flatly, and he thought the hon. Gentleman referred to well established his case in his retort. But, to pass away from personalities, it was said that they wanted to place by this Bill the Boards of Guardians in the hands of the National League; but the answer to that was that nearly every Board of Guardians in Ireland had declared itself already in favour of national principles. That was not what they wanted. When political feeling ran neck-and-neck, it was impossible to keep political matters out of the administration of such Boards as Poor Law Boards, and what they wanted was to obviate the necessity of introducing political tests into the election of Poor Law Guardians, by giving the people the representation to which they were entitled. He would readily admit that at present unfit men were elected to these Boards on both sides. When he said unfit men, he meant that more capable men, but who might not have strong political feelings one way or the other, were not chosen. It was their desire, not alone in this matter, but in every other effort at serious legislation which they made in that House, to so frame their measures as to obviate the necessity for the continual exercise of political feelings on both sides, and to give a chance to men of evenly-balanced minds to come in and administer such Boards as Poor Law Boards. It would, he thought, be hard for those who opposed this Bill to show that the Irish Party had any other object in view in introducing this measure. He had some experience of the present system. He knew that sheaves of voting papers were taken and filled up on both sides on behalf of certain men nominated to represent certain political principles, and who would not be nominated if they did not represent these political principles. Now, under this Bill there would be room for useful men, who might not lean to one set of political principles or the other. Under the old system the people had no representation. The Land League and the National League set itself to attack that system, and, of course, in attacking a bad system there could not be perfection in the attack itself. In former times it was the custom that the landlord, the lord of the soil, should be Chairman, that his agent should be Vice Chairman, and that the deputy agent should be Deputy Vice Chairman. He was stating facts, and the rest of the Board was made up of the bailiff, the rent-warner, the driver, and the few lick-plates who surrounded the "big" house. He would appeal to the Tory Members above the Gangway whether that was a system to which they desired the country to revert? He had known men, under that system, to go against their political principles and their consciences, and even their faith. He would not dwell further on that part of the subject beyond saying that he thought it would be found that all the principles which he said they desired to enforce were amply provided for. In the Bill they also provided for triennial elections, so that a man who, although he might be a good, sound, and useful man, might have momentarily incurred popular disfavour, could not be immediately swept off the Poor Law Board. Another satisfactory and sufficient reason for substituting triennial for annual elections was that the expenses of the elections came out of the rates levied for the relief of the poor. There were also provisions regarding the trial of election petitions. The measure, in fact, was word for word, letter for letter, and comma for comma, with the provisions of the Bill which had already passed the House. By an error the qualification of candidates was fixed at £12, whereas it was intended to allow the matter in blank, so that the House might fill it in with a figure which they might think proper. For his part, he did not think there was any necessity for this double-barrelled reservation regarding property. When they had property represented on a sliding scale gradually increasing in ratio to the value of the property there was no need, in his opinion, for this property qualification of a candidate. If property was sufficiently represented —and he thought the House would agree that it was sufficiently, and more than sufficiently, represented, when one man could outvote 18 others if he had property enough—he did not see what need there was for a reservation on the class of candidates. Indeed, it was their experience that in certain electoral divisions it would be expedient that the occupier of a cottage and a few acres of ground, but who might not have sufficient to cover the necessary qualification, should be the Guardian of the district. At present the rate varied in Ireland from £30 and £25 in some districts, to £10 in other districts. But they would be prepared to allow the House, in its wisdom, to fix the figure if they considered that there should be any figure at all. With these observations, he would now conclude by asking the House to read this Bill a second time.

Mr. DWYER GRAY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green), in seconding the Motion, said, that whatever might be thought of the merits of the particular Bill under discussion, he did not think there could be any difference of opinion as to the ability displayed, or the manner in which it was proposed. He believed that this Bill was before the House for 15 years. To his knowledge, it was before the House for 10 years, and it was quite correct to say that, in this respect, it was a kind of epitome of Irish history. It passed the House of Commons several times, and when it was sent to the House of Lords it was treated in the manner which his hon. Friend had described. On the last occasion it was referred to a Select Committee by the House of Lords; but those who supported the Bill declined to give evidence before a Committee appointed for the palpable purpose of obstructing the passage of the Bill. There were several hon. Members in that House sitting on the Benches opposite who were constantly advising the Irish Nationalist Party that they ought to trust to the goodwill of English Members, and that they had nothing to do but to bring Irish grievances forward in the House of Commons in order to have them remedied. Well, here was a Bill of a third or fourth-rate importance, and, although it was before the House for 15 years, it had not yet been dealt with. This was not a question of the goodwill of the House; it was a question of its power; and he doubted the power of the House to insist on having its decisions carried out when Irish matters were under consideration. For that reason Irish Members declined to even discuss this question of goodwill. He had no doubt some Tory Members would not object to the provision regarding the Ballot; but that reform without the others contemplated in this Bill would, in his opinion, make the present state of things even more mischievous than at this moment. These were the provisions regarding proxy voters and the number of *ex officios*. *Ex officios* rarely attended except when elections of officers were to take place, or when some job was to be done, and, he should add, when the religion of some deserted child had to be decided. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] It was quite true. He did not think that anything more lamentable could occur in civilized life than a meeting of the South Dublin Board of Guardians when the religion of some poor little waif found in the streets had to be decided. It was found that the *ex officio* Guardians had the power to outvote the Catholic Guardians. The chances were 50 to one that a waif found in the City of Dublin was born of Catholic parents, certainly of a Catholic mother, and yet the chances were 100 to one that the Guardians of the Union would vote so as to make that child a Protestant. When any official was to be elected then the *ex officio* Guardians were to be found on the spot—every one of them. He knew of one distinguished Gentleman, formerly a Member of this House, and at present a Member of the Upper House, who was in the habit of coming over from England in order to vote at the election of officials, and back he went again. But as to attending to the business of the Board, of course, he was far too great a representative of wealth and of intelligence to do anything of that sort. An examination of the books and records of the North Dublin Union would show that that particular Gentleman never attended a meeting of the Board convened for merely business purposes. But when an officer, a clerk, or a medical doctor was to be elected—when the committees were forming and manipulated, then, and only on occasions of that kind, *ex officios* of that complexion were to be found present in their full force. That was the way the *ex officio* element worked. The hon. Member for South Londonderry (Mr. T. M. Healy) had moved for a Return of the attendances of *ex officio* Guardians and elected Guardians, and the Return showed some very remarkable results. But could it have been shown in that Return what the particular business on the paper was when the *ex officio* members attended, it would have demonstrated what he (Mr. Gray) asserted of his own knowledge—that they never attended except when there was an election of an official, the religion of a child to be decided, or some contract to be given away. Now, in England the representation of that class being restricted to one-third, it was in the power of the elected Guardians to protect the interest of the ratepayers and the public. But in Ireland, inasmuch as the representation of their *ex officios* was one-half, and as through these the proxy property vote and various other matters were introduced into the Irish system, some of which, no doubt, existed in the English system, they always, or nearly always, had a working majority of the Board—a majority which never did any work except of the class he had described. The result was that the elective force and power in the Boards of Guardians was ineffective for useful work, except to a certain extent. It was allowed to do the routine business of the Board, but had no voice when anything of importance was to be decided. It was for the House to say if that was a system it approved of. He did not think they would approve of it. The proxy system was one involving abuse of the grossest character. He knew himself of cases which proved that fact. The proxies could be held by one man, for five years—practically for six years—and he knew of a case in which a man, who for a long time was the agent for a political Party in Dublin, held a large number of proxies for each electoral division of the particular Union in which he was concerned, and this resulted, practically, in his returning a large number of Guardians in his own interest, and they appointed him Clerk of the Union at a very large salary. Such cases could be multiplied by his hon. Friend; but the possibility of one was enough to condemn the system. It would not do merely to establish vote by Ballot without accompanying it by the abolition of proxy voting. He had much pleasure in seconding the proposition.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Edward Harrington.*)

Colonel KING-HARMAN (Kent, Isle of Thanet) said, the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down (Mr. Gray) had made a rather startling statement—that the *ex officio* Guardians at present in Ireland possessed by their own votes a power able to influence and to produce a workable majority at almost all the Boards in Ireland. If that were so, and if it was also a fact that these *ex officios* only attended at the election of officers, &c., how came it that in five-sixths of the Unions the Chairmen elected were members of the National League, returned by the elected Guardians? He thought that fact disposed of the statement as to the overwhelming power of the *ex officios*. The hon. Member who moved the Bill (Mr. E. Harrington) made a speech of much force and ability, and one with which he had not much to quarrel. But in that speech he spoke of the Bill as though it contained one principle, and one only—vote by Ballot. But the hon. Member who seconded the Motion informed the House that it would be no use unless other principles were affirmed. Now, as to the question of vote by Ballot for Poor Law Guardians in Ireland, he, for one, did not in the slightest degree object to seeing the secrecy of the Ballot extended to Ireland. He agreed that there had been intimidation practised in the Poor Law elections in Ireland. He did not deny that in some cases the influence of the landlords and agents had been extensively used; but, on the other hand, the hon. Gentleman who moved the Bill did not deny that intimidation of another character had been very largely practised. Large gangs of men went round the country, broke into houses, took the voting papers, and——

MR. E. HARRINGTON: I beg the hon. and gallant Gentleman's pardon. He is giving a most elastic and fanciful interpretation of what I said.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: I had no idea just now of quoting the words of the hon. Member, but was merely stating what actually occurred. The hon. Gentleman simply stated that the landlords and agents and the "prime boys" of the Land League ran a neck-and-neck race. But there was no need to go further into the question. He and those who acted with him would be glad to accept the principle of Ballot; most likely it would cut one way as well as another. He believed that intimidation in general worked so as to make the voter vote for the National candidate. In their own interest, therefore, he and his Friends were prepared to accept the principle of the Ballot. But there were other principles in the Bill to which they objected, such as taxation without representation. They maintained that Poor Law Boards should not be the arenas of political strife. The duties of the Guardians were to raise taxes for local purposes, and to spend the money thus raised for the relief of the poor; those who had the largest stake in respect of property, and who paid the largest proportion of the rates, should have a larger voice in the election of Guardians than those paying only a few shillings. He contended that the system by which the proportion of *ex officios* was one-half in Ireland worked well. No sufficient cause had been shown why the proportion of *ex officio* members should be reduced from one-half to one-third. It was an absolute fallacy to say that the law in England was that the *ex officio* representatives should be only one-third, because the number of *ex officio* representatives in this country was practically unlimited, and there was no law fixing it at a third or any particular number. He was not opposed to the principle of triennial elections. It was said that the Bill was shelved in the Lords by referring it to a Select Committee, which bristled with colonels and captains.

MR. E. HARRINGTON: No; I said that the evidence before the Committee was mainly supplied by colonels, captains, and so forth.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN said, that of the 17 witnesses examined only two of them had any military title, and it was not true that no Nationalists were examined, for there were three. He did not see why this Bill should not refer to England and Scotland. He strongly objected to Clause 9, which did away entirely with proxy voting. It was hard upon invalids and women that they should be obliged to go out and face a crowd at the poll if they desired to have their vote recorded. At the same time, there was something in the objection which was raised to persons residing away from their property altogether having as much voice in the fixing of the rates as those who lived at home. But how could a man whose property was situated in two or three Unions, and, perhaps, in nine or ten electoral divisions of those Unions, record his vote at each polling place? Voting for Poor Law Guardians meant, purely and simply, voting for the fixing of taxation; and if an owner of property was prevented from delivering his vote on the question as to how his property was to be taxed, and how the taxation was to be administered, it amounted to nothing more or less than taxation without representation. Any man who had delivered a vote at any one polling place in any division should be allowed to record his vote in respect of property held by him in any other Union by means of a registered letter. With regard to the question of qualification, it was only fair that a man who was to have the management of taxation, and, what was more important, the care of the poor committed to his charge, should be a man who had some stake and some responsibility in the country, as he was much more likely to be careful of the rates than the man who had no responsibility and nothing at stake. He ventured to say that the best managed Unions in Ireland were those in which the qualification stood highest and the *ex officio* Guardians attended most. The taxation in those Unions was lower than in others, and the poor were looked after very much better. There was more jobbing in

Unions where the *ex officio* members did not properly attend. Boards of Guardians were now divided into political Parties; the election of Guardians was a political contest simply, and to further a political purpose was the object of the Bill.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Colonel King-Harman.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

CAPTAIN VERNEY (Bucks, N., Buckingham) said, that Irish Gentlemen were always getting to windward of the English Members. When they got hold of a good measure they introduced a clause that it should not apply to England or Scotland, and a former speaker had proceeded to denounce "captains and colonels." Now, he, as a captain, stood up to show that a good man might be found even among that obnoxious class. He rose to ask hon. Members on the Liberal side of the House, if they had any sympathy with the suffering lower classes of England, to join hands with the Irish Members, to show that in this case at least there was no opposition of race, and that there was a real and earnest desire to help those who could not help themselves. He was personally acquainted with men who were teetotallers, who led self-denying, righteous lives, who could point out how hopeless was their chance of rising in the world, with no prospect but the workhouse, and who saw nothing before them but ending their lives almost like the beasts of the fields. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] He was sorry to hear hon. Members say "Oh!" because that showed that they were not in touch with these people in the agricultural constituencies of the country. Let them try to do something to raise the man above the animal. Now that they had come back fresh from their constituencies, and before the feeling of sympathy wore off, they wanted to ask the House of Commons for some practical measure which would help to alleviate the condition of these poor people. They did not want to wait for a Local Government Bill. Here was a thoroughly practical measure which had passed the House before, which started no new theory, and which did not wait for any new application of local self-government. The principles of the Bill were more trust in the people and the lowering of the property qualification. He should wish to see that qualification altogether abolished. If men were fit to sit in that House without a property qualification, surely they were fit to sit at Boards of Guardians, nor should *ex officio* Guardians be ashamed to sit among them. It would be more dignified for *ex officio* Guardians to abstain from voting when appointments were to be given away to a relative. Something had been said about the influence of the landlord. It was enormous, and was not to be weighed by the vote he gave at a Board of Guardians. A landowner might have great influence among his tenants if he understood their feelings and lived among them, and might lead them anywhere; but why he should want to have more than one vote he (Captain Verney) could not understand. The landlord ought to be content to vote for one Guardian; and voting by proxy should be done away with. He was in favour of vote by Ballot, application of the Corrupt Practices Act to these elections, the abolition of the property qualification, and having labouring men able to sit on the Boards of Guardians. When the Bill got into Committee he should move an Instruction that it should apply to England as well as to Ireland.

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.) said, he thought that all the arguments of the hon. and gallant Member who had just spoken were in favour of the extension of the principle of the Bill to England and Scotland; but, in discussing the question as far as it concerned Ireland, it was well to consider by whom the contributions to the rates were made. He (Colonel Waring) hoped to see labouring men sitting at Boards of Guardians. When the labouring men contributed in a larger proportion to the rates which were expended he thought it would be fair and right that they should have a voice in their administration. He did not know how low the range of the poor rate in England was, but in Ireland, however, no person living in a house rated at less than £4 contributed anything to the rates expended under the authority of the Boards of Guardians; the landlords always paid as much as half the entire amount, and in some cases they contributed five-eighths or three-quarters of the rating of the whole division. He had no objection to the suggested vote by Ballot, which would probably be found to act quite as much in favour of the landowners as against them; but as to proxy voting, he thought the suggestion of the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet (Colonel King-Harman) was a fair one. He could not see any reason why a person holding property and largely contributing to the rates in one Union should be disfranchised in another Union in which he held property. The vote did not in this matter represent a man's individuality, but his property; and he did not see why he should be called upon to select for which Union he should vote. They had heard something said about *ex officio* Guardians appearing on great occasions to vote for the election of officers, and for what was said to be a job; but, as a member of another body, in which jobs were sometimes said to be perpetrated — namely, the magistrates and associated cesspayers — his experience was that the jobs that were perpetrated were never assisted by the class of gentlemen to whom they had been attributed in the present discussion. He had himself frequently driven in Ireland many a weary mile in bad weather to prevent the perpetration of a job, and he had no recollection of a case in which he or his brother magistrates had gone in order to perpetrate one. He could not think that £12 was a sufficient qualification in many instances to secure economy of expenditure. In the Union for which he sat the argument had over and over again been made use of—especially in questions touching the medical relief, half of the contributions to which were paid out of the Consolidated Fund—that it did not much matter what was done, because only one-fourth of the charge fell upon the occupiers, and that was frequently the cause of the most reckless expenditure. Therefore, he held that the £12 qualification was not sufficient to obtain for a man the confidence of his brother ratepayers that he would narrowly look after the administration of the funds and see that they were not wasted. But the strongest objection he had to the Bill was the proposed reduction in the number of *ex officio* Guardians entitled to attend the Board. As a matter of fact, the number of *ex officio* Guardians who did attend never came up to the limit proposed; but the diminution of the number on the list would very much further reduce the attendance, because gentlemen who held that position were frequently called by their avocations to various parts of the country, and could not always be on the spot where the cultivators of the soil must necessarily be. He thought it would be found that the Unions where the *ex officio* Guardians attended most regularly where those in which the funds were most ably and economically managed. In his own Union his experience was that the attendance of *ex officio* Guardians was pretty steady, but not excessive, and that they enjoyed the confidence of the ratepayers in the district to a very large extent. To the vote by Ballot he had no objection; but he thought it necessary to enter his protest against the reduction of the qualification to £12, and against the abolition of proxy voting.

Mr. ARCH (Norfolk, N.W.) said, he supported the recommendation made by the hon. and gallant Member for Bucks (Captain Verney) that the Bill should be extended in its application to England. He had taken a considerable interest in this question of Poor Law, and had watched with interest its administration in rural districts; and he was able to testify that some such measure was sorely needed in the rural counties of England. He was glad to hear the Chief Secretary for Ireland state that the Government would soon be able to introduce a Local Government Bill which would benefit that class. On behalf of the poor agricultural constituencies in England, he desired to press upon them the importance of such a step. As to the property qualification, the hon. and gallant Member (Colonel Waring) had said that a qualification of £12 was too low for candidates for seats on the Poor Law Boards, and he considered that it should be higher. The hon. and gallant Member had spoken as if only property holders had anything to do with the payment of rates; but it was a fact that there were thousands of labourers who were paying indirectly, their rates being incorporated in their rents. There were many men who engaged with farmers to work for a certain wage per week, and to live in the farm cottages, the rates for which were paid directly by the farmer, but were taken into consideration in the amount paid to the labourer. A man in the humbler walks of life was, in his opinion, better fitted for the consideration of questions affecting the requirements of the poor, labouring classes than a wealthy man. He was himself debarred from offering himself as a candidate for the Board of Guardians in the Union where he resided. He and his father had paid rates in the same parish for 40 years; but if he offered himself as a Guardian, he would at once be told that he had not the requisite property qualification of a £20 rating. When he sought a seat in that House at the last Election he was never asked what property qualification he possessed, but was simply asked by his constituents what his politics were; and it was a monstrous absurdity that a man who was qualified for a seat in Parliament should not be considered to possess the necessary qualification for a seat at a Board of Guardians. Then, as regarded *ex officio* Guardians, he failed to see the wisdom of the present state of things. The hon. Gentlemen who, having had a seat in that House, and who, on seeking re-election, were defeated, did not come back and say—"We ought to be admitted as *ex officio* Members." They would not admit them on that ground; and he wanted to know what the justice was of admitting to the Board of Guardians persons who had not been elected by the ratepayers to fill the office of Guardian? He believed that the poor suffered keenly, because they were not directly represented on the Boards of Guardians. He had had some painful experience of Boards of Guardians; and where Guardians of the higher qualification meted out justice to the poor, injustice was done. He asked the House to pardon him if he mentioned his own case. His father had paid rates in a Warwickshire Union for upwards of 32 years without asking a farthing from the parish. He himself, seeing now many of his class found themselves in old age with no other dependence than the Union, insured himself at the early age of 17. After he was married and had a family of six children depending upon him, his father's health gave way, and he had nothing to fall back upon. He wrote to the Guardians stating the case, and he received, in reply, an offer to take his father into the Union if he would pay 1*s*. 6*d*. a-week for his support. There were many cases harder than that. During the last 14 years, when men and women had applied for relief, the Board of Guardians had forced their children—the poor labourers who were scarcely able to make ends meet—to maintain them in the Union by paying 1*s*. or 1*s*. 6*d*. a-week out of their small earnings. Not from any want of love for their parents, but from their inability to find the money, they had been unable to meet the demand, and they had been sent to gaol. Was it not, then, time that working men had seats on the Boards of Guardians? He contended that the time had come when such a Bill as this should be brought in for England, and when the Poor Law should be placed upon a sounder basis —a basis more Christian and more humane.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary) said, he did not complain that hon. Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House (Radicals) followed their example on this question. They had no desire to prevent them from "taking leaves out of the book" of the Irish Members in their endeavouring to obtain an amelioration of the Poor Law system. They hoped they would, however, obtain their support in trying to obtain further measures of popular self-government for Ireland. He had occasion recently to investigate another branch of local government in Ireland, and found that the hon. and gallant Member for the Island of Thanet (Colonel King-Harman) had opposed almost every measure of such a kind proposed for Ireland. He had made one charge which he believed should be met—that was with regard to the mismanagement of Poor Law Boards except where *ex officios* predominated. The fact was that out of the 163 Unions in Ireland it was only found necessary by the Local Government Board to suspend one since the year 1845, and that was one in which *ex officios* predominated. He also made another charge with regard to intimidation in regard to Poow Law elections. This Bill had, however, been introduced for the purpose of stopping that intimidation—not only the intimidation which the hon. and gallant Member said proceeded from what he termed the "prime boys of the National League," but also the much more serious intimidation by the bailiffs of the landlords. The first principle of the Bill was that Guardians should hold office for three years. He had a good deal to do with elections of Poor Law Guardians in the South of Ireland, and their great complaint was that they were compelled to proceed to election every year. He did not care whether the Guardians were Conservative, Liberal, or Nationalist —he did not believe that it was necessary to elect the members of the Poor Law Boards every year. Politics might change every week, or even every hour, but the cause of the poor was the same at all times. They had a high authority for this in the verse which stated that "The poor are always with us." Another principle of the Bill was that elections should be conducted by Ballot. If there was to be proxy voting, he held that open voting was necessary; but if they abolished proxy voting, the voting by Ballot, which had been so successful in all other matters, Imperial and National, should be adopted in regard to Local Boards. The principle of representation for taxation had been greatly abused in Irish Poor Law elections; and if they had to choose one of two evils it was best that they should choose the lesser, and abolish proxy voting. The hon. Member for St. Stephen's Green (Mr. Gray) stated that he knew of a case where a gentleman had a sufficient number of proxy votes to vote himself a salary of £800 a-year; and he also knew a case of a family in Cork who were able to sign 150 proxy votes, some for persons as wide apart as the West Indies and Ceylon. These, however, were placed in the hands of a local landlord, who used them for his own purposes. The principle might be amended in Committee; but the people desired that some limitation should be placed upon the exercise of this proxy system in regard to Poor Law government. He had also a word to say with regard to the *ex officio* Guardians. In 1882, when it was said "Irish discontent was driven beneath the surface," and many hon. Members on the Benches near him were under lock and key, they knew how the *ex officios* had acted. When his hon. Friend the Member for West Waterford (Mr. Pyne) sought the position of Chairman of the Lismore Board of Guardians, to his (Mr. John O'Connor's) knowledge, *ex officios* came from Switzerland and Italy who had never been known to attend the Board before to vote against him. Another such case occurred in the case of the election of a Chairman of the Clonmel Board of Guardians. One *ex officio* Guardian came from Italy to vote who had not been within the walls of the Union before for 20 years. They were told that the Nationalist Guardians mismanaged the Unions; but he could tell the House that the Local Government Board Inspector congratulated his hon. Friend the Member for North Tipperary (Mr. P. J. O'Brien) upon the good management of the Nenagh Union since it got into the hands of the popular Party. A similar state of things existed in Clonmel, for the Tipperary Unions which, under the management of the *ex officio* Boards, were in a state of bankruptcy, were now in the most flourishing condition under popular control. In conclusion, he thanked the House for the way in which the measures of the Irish Party had been received in the present Parliament.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne) said: Mr. Speaker, I quite agree with the hon. Member who has just sat down that this Bill is not likely to receive less favourable consideration from this Parliament than from the Parliament of 1884 and 1885. We have heard the objections of the hon. and gallant Member for Thanet (Colonel King-Harman), who recapitulated most of those used in the last Parliament. But nothing which has occurred in the interval from the consideration of the Bill in the last Parliament to the present day makes any difference in the weakness of his objections or the strength of the arguments by which they were met. The Bill contains principles which have been found already to meet with substantial agreement in all quarters of the House. The proposal that elected Guardians shall hold office for three years instead of one year, is one that commends itself to all of us. That elections should be conducted under the Ballot Act is a point that was practically settled years ago, and nothing has been said from that—the Tory—quarter of the House to-day to show that another opinion should be held upon that head. Not so many questions have been put to me since I became Chief Secretary as to my Predecessor in the last Parliament with regard to the Poor Law elections, but enough have been put to show that there is a very considerable abuse under the existing system. The preparation of the Register is another important practical point upon which there has been a complete agreement. The Bill provides that the Lists and Registers of voters shall not be extempore lists made out, almost casually, immediately before the election. The Local Government Board of Ireland feel very strongly the necessity for another proposal—namely, that, in cases where the validity of an election is questioned, the petition ought to be heard, not, as at present, by an Inspector sent down by the Local Government Board, but before the County Court Judge. There is one point upon which opinion seems to be divided—that is as regards the property qualification for an elected Guardian. The Bill provides that the qualification should be a fixed one—namely, a rating of £12. I have listened to all that has been said as to the existing practice in regard to the matter; and the House should know, as a matter of fact, that the average qualification is at present about £20. Of course, the qualification varies, and is sometimes as high as £30, and sometimes as low as £6, as fixed at the discretion of the Local Government Board. They exercise that discretion in view of the average wealth of the district and other considerations, and the result is a qualification of £20. That does not materially differ from the average in England. The Government entirely approve of the reduction of the qualification to the figure named in the Bill. There are two points upon which there is a distinct division of opinion, and there always has been that division—first, regarding the retention of the proxy voting; and, secondly, regarding the number of *ex officio* Guardians. Well, the hon. and gallant Member (Colonel King-Harman) did not, under the circumstances, over-ingenously quote the opinion of my Predecessor, the right hon. Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan). No doubt, in 1882, he did express to the House an opinion adverse to the change; but in 1884 the then Chief Secretary, the right hon. Member for the Border Burghs, stated in the course of a debate that he had been led to change his views; and after a speech, in which he laid down the principle that proxy voting might be altered, he was taunted with his change of views by a right hon. Gentleman who is now Lord Ashbourne, and of this the hon. and gallant Gentleman must have been aware.

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I was perfectly aware of it. He changed his mind; but he gave his reasons for one opinion, but not for the other. This was what I stated.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: I think I have stated what was the impression left by the hon. Member on the House; but I do not press the matter. It has been said with regard to the extension of the provisions of this Bill to England that it would be well to alter the system of proxy voting. I may state that at the meeting of the assembly of Poor Law Conferences very considerable sympathy was expressed with the views of my right hon. Friend the Member for Chelsea (Sir Charles W. Dilke), who is entirely opposed to proxy voting in any shape or form. I should say that when the present Government bring in their Local Government Bill, I should not be surprised if it is found that proxy voting will disappear in England. It is obvious, therefore, that we cannot disagree with the proposal in the Bill to remove that feature in the election of elective Boards of Guardians in Ireland. The next point is the number of *ex officio* Guardians. The number of *ex officio* Guardians in Ireland is at present one-half, while in England the number is one-quarter or one-third of the elective representatives. Now, I have listened very carefully to the arguments from hon. Gentlemen opposite, and I must say that I have heard more arguments for this reduction from them than against it. In 1884-5 the hon. and gallant Member for Thanet (Colonel King-Harman) admitted that in three-fourths of the Unions in Ireland the elected Guardians had already practically the control, more or less, even with the *ex officios;* and, therefore, this reduction of the *ex officios* cannot make any substantial difference in regard to the protection of property. It was also admitted by the hon. and gallant Member for Down (Colonel Waring) that the attendance of *ex offiico* Guardians, except upon occasions when special matters were on foot, was not very constant nor useful when business was of an ordinary character.

However all that may be, it is perfectly clear to me that we cannot, upon principle, contend that the proportion of *ex officio* Poor Law Guardians in Ireland should be greater than it is in England, although the amount payable in rates by the people in Ireland place them at a certain disadvantage in regard to property in respect of rating. I have read the evidence given before the Lords' Committee last year pretty carefully, and it has no more been proved by the witnesses before the Lords' Committee, than it has been proved by any previous speaker, that the power possessed by *ex officio* Guardians afforded any substantial or effective protection to property. For my own part, I agree with hon. Members representing English constituencies who express the hope that when we extend local government in England we shall also do away with *ex officio* representation, and with another artificial protection of property which exists in Ireland in a very elaborate form—namely, plurality of voting. I may remind the House of this, in conclusion, with regard to what has been urged against both proxy voting and the use of voting papers, that they have already been condemned by a Committee of the House of Commons which sat, I think, in 1878, under the Presidency of the Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert). It is clear, therefore, that a Bill which moves so obviously in the direction in which we wish to go is one which we cannot now refuse to assent to; and I, for one, shall give it my cordial support.

Mr. HOLMES (Dublin University) said, he had no desire to prolong the discussion on this Bill, but thought what he had to say might have a tendency to shorten it. He thought it was a matter for regret that there should be introduced into a subject ot this kind either attacks upon classes, professions, or individuals. It seemed to him that in dealing with the Bill before the House the subject should be met in a different spirit. Boards of Guardians were not established for political purposes, their objects being solely the relief of the poor, and to impose rates for that purpose, and to expend those rates in as efficient a manner as possible. He was sure that the opposition to the Bill was only upon certain points contained in it which his hon. Friends thought would not render the measure efficient. It had always been their desire that property should be properly represented; and he understood that there was no objection from any part of the House to such a proposition. In Ireland the owners of property paid, taking the entire country together, five-eighths of the rates; but in certain of the poorer Unions, where the property was poorly valued, they probably paid three-fourths of the rates. For the purpose of giving property its due weight and due significance two provisions were made in the existing Poor Law—the one was the plural vote, and the other the system of *ex officio* Guardians. This Bill did not seek to interfere with the principle that property should have adequate representation, or with either of the modes in which property was represented. The hon. Member for Kerry (Mr. E. Harrington) did not propose by this Bill to destroy the constitution of the Board in so far as the Board was constituted of *ex officio* Guardians. The Bill did not intend to deprive property of the protection which the plural vote gave it; therefore, it seemed to him that many of the arguments addressed to the House to-day were wholly irrelevant to the subject under discussion, for many of the arguments had been directed against the system of *ex officio* Guardians, and also against the system of plural voting—matters with which they were not concerned. Those principles were not concerned or affected by the Bill. When they came to examine this measure in detail they found the objections to it were really objections to two or three clauses of it. One of the objections was to the abolition of the system of voting by proxy; and another referred to the change which was made in the number of *ex officio* Guardians. The objections were to matters of great importance, and were not unreasonable objections; and the observations made by the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet (Colonel King-Harman) were observations which commended themselves very favourably to his (Mr. Holmes') mind. It seemed to him that if they had property representation at all proxy voting in some form—he did not say that the form in which it existed now was a necessary complement of that—must prevail, and that they would interfere in a very material degree with that representation which property now obtained if they destroyed voting by proxy altogether. The other objection was, perhaps, of greater importance still—the objection to the change made in the number of *ex officio* Guardians. He confessed that the only two arguments he had heard to-day in favour of that proposition were that the *ex officio* Guardians did not sufficiently attend to their duties, and that when they did attend it was only for the purpose of promoting their own ends. If they did not attend to their duties there might be some reasonable ground for excluding them from the Board, and supplying their place by some other persons who would represent property; but it would hardly be a reasonable argument for reducing their number from one-half to one-third of the Board. The attendance would certainly be less if they were only one-third instead of one-half of the Board. In regard to the attendance of *ex officio* Guardians at the meetings of the Board, he asked the House to bear in mind that *ex officio* Guardians were magistrates, and that as magistrates they had very important public duties to perform in addition to their private duties. Generally speaking they were members of other Boards, and it was but reasonable to suppose that gentlemen in such a position had less opportunity of attending Board meetings than elected Guardians, who probably were not so immersed in public duties. Now, if their number upon the Boards were reduced, it was quite plain they would not have the same degree of weight on the Board that their position rendered it necessary they should have. These considerations, so far from forming reasons for reducing the numbers from one-half to one-third, seemed to him to point in the other direction. Now, as to the argument that the *ex officio* members were very fond of jobs, and that they only attended for the purpose of perpetrating jobs, he was not a person who considered that virtue was a monopoly of any class of the community. He could well understand that an *ex officio* Guardian might be anxious to carry out some job that would benefit either a friend or relation, such as the appointment of a Chairman, a clerk, or some official receiving pay, and he could imagine a number of *ex officio* Guardians combining together for the benefit of some particular individual. But if he could imagine that he could just as readily imagine that an elected Guardian would be very anxious to carry out some job, and that a number of elected Guardians would combine together for the perpetration of some job. Just as he believed that elected Guardians were a check upon *ex officio* Guardians in the jobbery which was said to exist, did he consider that the *ex officio* Guardians, representing property, might act as a very valuable check upon the elected Guardians in respect to jobbery; and he maintained that if they wished to preserve Boards of Guardians from a disposition towards jobbery the best course to adopt would be to keep up the balance which now existed instead of reducing one portion of the Board to a position which would be very inferior to that of the other portion. It must be borne in mind that Boards of Guardians had two duties—not one only—to perform. It had been suggested in the course of the debate that the great duty of Boards of Guardians was the duty of guarding the interests of the ratepayers. But they had another duty, and that was a duty to the poor. An hon. Gentleman who spoke from below the Gangway said that the poorer classes of Guardians regarded 1*s*. as of as much importance as the wealthier classes regarded £1, and he claimed a greater amount of parsimony for the elected Guardians. If a Board of Guardians were to act parsimoniously, they would, no doubt, spare the ratepayers, but they would do so at the expense of the poor; so with regard to parsimony and the attention which the Board were bound to pay to the poor, one body of Guardians would be a check upon the other. He was clearly of opinion that the provisions of the Bill in regard to the representation of property were vicious provisions, and in the proper place and under proper circumstances he should offer them his opposition. Something had been said about the history of the measure. It seemed to him that the very circumstance that so much care was taken in investigating the matter before a Select Committee showed that there was a desire to approach the question fairly, and to consider it fully and deliberately. According to his recollection, certain Amendments were introduced in "another place." The Bill fell through last Session by reason of these Amendments not being accepted by the promoters of the Bill. They had now got the Bill in exactly the same terms as before. Probably, if there had been some give and take, his hon. and gallant Friend would not have moved the Motion for the rejection of the measure now standing in his name. He submitted to the hon. and gallant Member whether, as some of the provisions of the Bill were undoubtedly valuable, it would be desirable to divide the House on the second reading, but that they should all endeavour, when it reached Committee, to introduce Amendments which would make the measure a most efficient one for the purpose for which it was designed.

Mr. COOTE (Huntingdon, S.) said, that that was an equally important question to the agricultural counties of England and Scotland. He held it to be monstrous to prevent the labourers from having the right of representation on Boards of Guardians merely because they did not pay the rates directly. When it was alleged that representatives of the labourers were not fit to sit on Boards of Guardians, he should like to know what hon. Gentlemen thought of those Representatives of the labouring class who now sat in that House. His own experience of *ex officio* members of Boards of Guardians was that they showed up when questions of the election of a Chairman, a clerk, or some other salried official had to be decided, but that they did not attend in anything like proper numbers from week to week, while the hard work of the Board, on the other hand, was done by the direct representatives of the people. He trusted, as a Member for an agricultural constituency, that the Government would take the opportunity of adopting the principle of enabling the labourers to have representatives on Boards of Guardians in England and Scotland, without waiting until it was convenient for them to introduce their expected Local Government Bill.

Mr. MARUM (Kilkenny, N.), said, he thought that no Justice of the Peace should be qualified to be an *ex officio* Guardian of the poor in a Union unless he was a ratepayer of that Union, and that no Lieutenant of a county, who might be a strong political partizan, should virtually have the power of giving a particular colour to a Board of Guardians.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 203; Noes 105: Majority 98.—(Div. List, No. 99.)

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

RAILWAY REGULATION BILL.

(*Mr. Channing, Mr. Joseph Leicester, Mr. John Wilson* (Durham), *Mr. C. S. Parker, Mr. Jacoby, Mr. Lawson.*)

[BILL 97.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): Mr. Speaker, in rising to move the second reading of this Bill, I feel, Sir, that some apology is due to the House for the fact that a measure of such importance, dealing with so great and wide interests, and specially affecting the functions of a great Department of the State, should be brought before the House by a private Member. I can only assure the House that I took the step of introducing this Bill after consultation with those whose experience is much greater than my own. I may also remind hon. Members that when my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade introduced the Railway and Canal Traffic Bill, I did my utmost to urge upon him the advisability of dealing with the question of railway safety in that measure, as well as railway rates. Sir, I feel that the difficulties of a private Member carrying a measure of this kind through the House are so great that I strongly hope that the case which is to be laid before the House and the Government to-day may induce the Government to consent to the adoption of this Bill, or to hold forth some promise of dealing with this question on the lines we propose. Sir, this Bill rests on three propositions. The first is that the Railway Companies, in return for the concessions under which they have carried out their commercial enterprizes, have assumed certain duties—one of which is to provide the maximum of safety for the public and their servants. The second is that a large proportion of the accidents involving loss of life and personal injury are preventible. The third, that when it can be shown that accidents are preventible, the State ought to interfere to insist on the discharge of their duty by the Railway Companies. I know, Sir, that I shall at once be met by the answer that railway accidents have diminished. It would, indeed, be surprising, considering the wide adoption of safety appliances and arrangements within the last 10 or 12 years, if accidents had not diminished. But I cannot admit that there has been any substantial diminution; and, in the classes of accidents specially covered by the clauses of this Bill, hon. Members will find, in the Reports issued by the Board of Trade, that there is a remarkable persistence of the types of accidents to prevent which is the chief object of this Bill. Take, for instance, the figures for fatal and other injuries from falling between carriages and platforms, and at level crossings. And, when we turn to the worst of all, the loss of life and injuries among the railway servants in all the operations connected with shunting, it amounts to a national scandal. But, Sir, it is really immaterial whether accidents have diminished or not. The real point is, whether the accidents which do occur can be prevented? The recent Reports of the Inspectors of the Board of Trade show conclusively that a very large number of accidents are due to the absence of safety arrangements, while other accidents are due to the fact that safety appliances are improperly worked. Well, Sir, what have we been doing, what are we doing, or what are we called on to rely to remedy this state of things? We are told, in the first place, to rely on the principle of responsibility — that the compensation which Railway Companies are compelled to pay will be a sufficient inducement to them to adopt the necessary precautions to insure the safety of passengers and servants. As to compensation, I think hon. Members will agree with me that itis not a powerful weapon. I may point out that whereas the total working expenditure, the cost of running a train mile, varies from about 2*s*. 6*d*. to a little over 3*s*., the amount of compensation for personal injuries which has gone to make up this sum has only been from a halfpenny down to one-sixth of a penny — less, in fact, than 1 per cent of the working expenditure. Then, as to responsibility, how has that principle been applied? When have we heard of a Railway Director being put on his trial, where the neglect of precaution has led to a fatal accident? The principle of responsibility has been applied; but it has not been applied to the Railway Directors, nor to the Railway Managers. It has been applied, again and again, to the unfortunate railway servant. It has been, too often, some poor signalman, or pointsman, or engine-driver, who has, perhaps, been exhausted by too prolonged hours of work, who has been doing his best to discharge his duty under great difficulties, and who has not been guarded against error by safety appliances, whose judgment has failed at the critical moment. It is men like these who have been brought to justice, and made the scapegoats of the neglect of their superiors. At inquests, held on the railway premises, and under the eye of railway officials, verdicts of manslaughter have again and again been brought in against railway servants; but I am glad to notice, in many cases, when these men have gone before a jury at the Assizes, they have been acquitted. Then, Sir, the second method of checking accidents has been the method of publicity—the system of the Returns of accidents under the Act of 1871, of the extension of the block system, and of the interlocking of signals and points under the Act of 1873, and of the application of continuous brakes under the Act of 1878. These Returns, of course, have their value. But I affirm that, when they are closely examined and compared with the facts stated in the investigation of accidents by the Board of Trade, the Returns are found to be untrustworthy. Take the block system. Practically many lines of railway are returned as being worked on the absolute block system; whereas it is found on examination that in practice the absolute block system is evaded and set aside. Passenger and goods trains are allowed to enter block sections under a warning arrangement, or with caution tickets, on several important lines. Goods trains are even allowed to advance towards a fouling-point on converging lines of rails without a ticket. In the last Report of the Board of Trade an accident is dealt with which might easily have been a serious disaster. At what is called the Crewe Junction of Chester Station two excursion trains were allowed to advance on converging lines of rails on the warning arrangement plan, and a collision occurred. And, in the Report of the accidents in 1883, attention is drawn to the fact that one of the regulations of the Railway Clearing House itself permits goods trains in shunting to pass beyond the signal box into a section which is not clear, and to be worked by hand signals. That is, the Railway Clearing House itself authorizes an evasion of the block system, which destroys its value. Take a case like that of the Somerset and Dorset Railway. That is a single line, and it has been returned as being worked on the absolute block and train staff system. There have been repeated accidents; and a fatal accident, which occurred only in February last, has brought out the fact that instead of being worked on the absolute block and train staff system, as stated in the Return made to the Board of Trade, the trains have been worked, and the crossing arrangements of trains meeting each other have been made by telegraph by an official at Bath. I do not think, therefore, that very great reliance can be placed on the remedy of "publicity." Then we have the powers exercised at present by the Board of Trade. The Board has the power of instituting inquiries into the causes of the accidents reported by the Companies, and of making recommendations based on these investigations. But the only real power which the Board possesses is that of postponing the opening of new lines, and of new parts of old lines, until the requirements they have laid down as indispensable for safety, as regards permanent way and the general equipment of the line, are completely satisfied. This power has repeatedly been used with the very best effect. But, Sir, there appears to be this anomaly—that just where the power is most needed—in the case of single lines—this power has no legal force. It is one of the requirements for the completeness of a line that it should have double rails, and a single line is, by that very fact, imperfect and incomplete. The practice is for the Board of Trade to license the opening of a single line on receiving an undertaking from the Directors that the line shall be worked on one of three specified plans for securing safety. But this undertaking has no legal force. It cannot—I believe I am right in stating—be enforced in a Court of Law, and the only real power the Board of Trade has in this matter is to proceed against a Company for making a false Return as to the system of working. As to the investigation of the causes of accidents, and the recommendations of the Inspectors, these recommendations have no legal force whatever, and their only weight with the Railway Companies is their inherent reasonableness. The Reports show that the recommendations have again and again been neglected. Where the defects which have caused an accident have been pointed out they have not been removed, and repeated accidents have been the consequence. In the Report on an accident at Cowdenbeath, in 1882, the Inspector says that urgent remonstrances have again and again been made as to the neglect of the North British Railway Company in not adopting the block system on their Fifeshire branch lines, with the result of repeated fatal accidents. I do not know what is the present position of these lines. But even supposing the recommendations have now been complied with, is it right that we should have had to wait till the repetition of disasters had quickened the sense of duty? It is no secret, Sir, that the Board of Trade has exercised its powers in other ways to enforce railway safety. When Companies have introduced Bills into Parliament to obtain extended powers, the Board of Trade has, in several instances, used its power of postponement not only to enforce its requirements on the new parts of the railway, but to insist on the adoption of safety appliances and other improvements on the old parts of the line. This has, doubtless, been most useful; but, I ask, would it not be better for the Board of Trade to exercise such a power in a straightforward manner, and by statute, than by stratagem and obstruction? It seems monstrous, too, that if the recommendations of the Inspectors of the Board as to the removal of defects which have brought about disasters are of any value, they should not be enforced and carried into effect promptly. And surely, Sir, it is most inconsistent and illogical that, while the Board of Trade is empowered to assert and enforce a standard of public safety on new parts of a line, it should not have the same power in regard to the older parts of a line, where human beings run exactly the same risks. Now, Sir, these confused and imperfect powers are consolidated in this Bill, and made a reality. I have, I hope, given some reasons for the Bill in pointing out where existing means fail to prevent accidents. But there are other arguments on which this measure rests. The Bill embodies the principles laid down in the recommendations of the only important Royal Commission which has thoroughly thrashed out the question of railway accidents, and which sat from 1874 to 1877, and reported, I believe, in February, 1877. That Commission reported in favour of this extension of the powers of the Board of Trade which I now propose. None of the recommendations have, as yet, been acted upon, except the question of compensation to servants in the Employers' Liability Act of 1880, the operation of which is now before a Select Committee of this House. Further, the principle of the recommendations of this Royal Commission was practically adopted by the Board of Trade during the last Liberal Administration, and accepted by the then Liberal Ministry, and sanctioned in the Railway Bill introduced by my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) in 1884. Now, Sir, I fear I have trespassed somewhat too long on the kind indulgence of the House; but I cannot but feel that this measure represents the wishes of a very large section of the public, and that I should not be doing justice to the case which has been intrusted to me if I did not say something as to the practical necessity for the proposals of this Bill. To deal first with the question of brakes, I would ask any impartial man who has looked into this question, who knows the history of "the battle," or, rather, "the muddle of the brakes," whether he does not really think that many hundreds of lives would have been saved, and that, leaving aside personal injuries, a vast amount of the money of railway shareholders might have been saved, if the Board of Trade had been enabled to intervene effectively some time ago? Hon. Members will have in their recollection that, after the important brake trials at Newark, the Board of Trade issued a Circular which defined clearly the necessary requirements of brakes if they are really to be effectual—and that the most important of these requirements were that they should be instantaneous in their action; that they should be self-acting; and that they should be continuously applied throughout the train and to the engine. That Circular also drew attention to the advantages of uniformity. It was pointed out that, on the through lines running to Scotland, it was of the greatest importance to be able to use the same type of brake throughout, and that accidents had frequently occurred, or been aggravated, by having the rolling stock fitted with different brakes. This difficulty, I believe, is now practically in process of being removed. But I cannot think it can have been very satisfactory to the shareholders of some of these railways that they should have been obliged, by want of uniformity, to pay for fitting their rolling stock with two, or even with three, different brakes on the same vehicle. I maintain it has been clearly proved that the requirements of the Board of Trade Circular are sound. Yet we actually find that, perhaps, the greatest and most important line in the whole country—the London and North-Western—still has nearly half its rolling stock fitted with an antediluvian brake, wholly unsuited to the requirements laid down by science and experience. We are all familiar with the saying attributed to the Chairman of the London and North-Western Company as to automatic brakes—that any man must be mad who would trust his safety to an automatic brake. I think the London and North-Western Railway have had some reason to learn the value of automatic brakes. Several times accidents have occurred on their line from trains breaking in part on inclines, notably at Wigan in 1884, when Colonel Rich commented very strongly on the defects of their brakes. And only the other day an accident took place at the New Street Station at Birmingham—in the presence of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham and the hon. Member for the Handsworth Division of Staffordshire (Mr. Wiggin)—from the fracture of a coupling, when a very serious collision might easily have come about had not the space the train had to run down the incline and on the level prevented it. This and other accidents would have been prevented by an automatic brake, which would at once have arrested the vehicles which had broken away. Now, Sir, the North-Western have recently decided to adopt a new system, and are fitting about half their rolling stock with a vacuum brake, which I believe I am correct in stating is substantially the same as the brake the failure of which brought about the terrible disaster on the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway at Penisstone in 1884, when 24 persons were killed and a very large number injured. To touch for one moment on another requirement in the Bill. Two recent accidents on the Metropolitan or District Railways, where a carriage in the middle of a train left the rails, and might easily have brought about a ghastly catastrophe, show the imperative necessity for electric communication between the guard and the engine-driver. I might deal with other points; but I turn at once to the questions which specially affect the safety of the railway servants, who suffer so terribly in life and limb. In one of the Reports laid before the country by the hon. Member for Great Yarmouth (Sir Henry Tyler), the hon. Gentleman dwelt on the startling and melancholy record of the casualties among railway servants, combated the theory that they suffered from their own recklessness, and pointed out many ways in which the work of railway servants might be made less dangerous. The recommendations in his Report are all covered by the proposals of this Bill—as, for instance, the question of better spaces for the working of the trains in shunting and other operations, and the question of improved couplings. For a long time there had been many practical inventions which would remove the necessity of the men going between the buffers to couple or uncouple waggons. Hon. Members might be aware that this question has excited much attention in America. In the States the goods traffic was conducted in long covered cars on bogey trucks, nearly as large as a Pullman car. It was obvious that there was infinitely less coupling and uncoupling to do, as compared with our system of a large number of small trucks. Then, too, owing to the adoption of the centre-buffer arrangement in the States, the accidents which occurred were of a much less serious nature—the loss of fingers and similar injuries of a trifling character—compared with the injuries to the body of being crushed between the buffers, the usual type of accident here. Yet, in several of the American States laws had been passed in the last few years compelling the Companies to adopt some kind of safety coupling within a specified time. There had recently been held some practical trials of couplings—automatic and non-automatic—by the kindness of the South-Western Company, at Nine Elms. These trials had been carried out by the railway servants themselves, and the prizes provided by their own funds. It was clearly shown that there are many useful and practical inventions for dealing with this danger. And I may mention that it is stated that one of the satisfactory couplings can be applied to railway stock at a cost of £1 per truck. The railway servants ask, and ask with reason, that when Railway Companies are prepared to spend £3 10*s*. on electric communication to give their first-class passengers a sense of security against a Lefroy or a Müller, who may be found on the railway once in 20 years, they should also be willing to spend 20*s*. on a railway truck, in coupling or uncoupling which a shunter or a goods guard may have to risk his life once a week. Then, Sir, there is the question of overtime work. I might give the House many recent instances of excessive hours of work among signalmen and engine-drivers. But hon. Members are so familiar with this subject that I shall not attempt to occupy the House with details. The clause in the Bill as to overtime is virtually the same as was proposed by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) in 1884, and is of so moderate a nature that I do not think it can be quarrelled with. To sum up, I would say that this Bill is not the mere expression of the views of a group of individuals. It is the direct legislative outcome of the Report of the Royal Commission. It is the carrying out of the deliberate decision of the previous Administration of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) and of the Board of Trade at that time. Further, Sir, this Bill comes before the House with the emphatic approbation of a large section of the public. It has been supported by nearly 200 Petitions from railway servants in every part of the country, and also by many public meetings. I appeal to this House to give it a favourable reception on behalf of the railway servants of this country. They have discharged, and are discharging, dangerous duties with loyalty and devotion, and they have the right to ask that those duties should be discharged under recognized conditions of safety to life and limb. Most of us here have travelled in the old times when safety arrangements had scarcely been introduced at all; when crowded express trains rushed through stations and junctions where our safety depended almost wholly on the unaided judgment of railway servants. We owe a debt, Sir, to the brave and loyal men whose cool heads and steady hands protected us from disaster under circumstances of the greatest difficulty. We owe it to them; we owe it to the widows and orphans of the thousands who have perished in serving us; we owe it to the men who are toiling now for us, and to their families, that we should insist that such appliances and such arrangements as have been proved to reduce human fallibility to a minimum, and to secure the maximum of safety for all, should be provided for the working of our railways. In conclusion, Sir, I sincerely trust that after the representations made to-day, the Government may either see their way to support the second reading of this Bill, or else that they may hold out such a decided intimation that they are prepared themselves to introduce such legislation based on its general principles as will give encouragement and satisfaction to the 350,000 railway men in whose name I have addressed the House to-day. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. JOHN WILSON (Durham, Houghton-le-Spring), in seconding the Motion, said, he thanked the hon. Member who had moved the second reading (Mr. Channing) for having brought so important a matter under the attention of the House. This was not, however, a new matter, for it had been before the country and both Houses of Parliament in previous years. He was quite prepared to admit that there was sufficient selfishness in us to enable us to say that if the matter in hand only appertained to a certain class, and did not affect our purses, we might be led to look lightly upon it; but the measure that had been submitted to the House that afternoon provided very largely for the safety of the public, as well as for the safety of the railway servants themselves. The hon. Gentleman the Mover of the second reading of the Bill (Mr. Channing) mentioned two or three objections that, perhaps, might be taken to it. He observed that it might be taken as an objection that this measure was an interference with the profits of the Railway Companies. He (Mr. John Wilson) thought that the time had gone by when money should be placed against men; and, therefore, money should not be allowed to stand in the way of such a Bill as this. This was not a matter which should be left to be settled by the workmen and their employers. He would grant that there were certain things that ought to be, and should be, left in the hands of the workmen and their employers, and he would be the last one there to ask for State interference where workmen could make their own arrangements; but he thought that, for the safety of the public, a matter like this should not be left in the hands of the employers and the employed. There were many cases in which questions might be left to private opinion. A gentleman, say, employed a coachman who was careless; that coachman might take out a coach with a wheel that was likely to come off, and so long as the careless man only hurt himself, it did not much matter, but so soon as he injured the members of the community, he (Mr. John Wilson) thought the State ought to interfere. The measure before the House was one which the workmen had taken upon themselves to meet to the best of their ability. They had by speech and by action tried to show that they were desirous that the best means and the best inventions should be adopted in order that no unnecessary expense might be incurred by the Railway Companies in introducing safety appliances for their men. The principles of this measure had been before the Trades Union Congress for some three or four years, and resolutions had been passed affirming it, and asking the House of Commons to deal with the matter. He remembered being at the Congress when the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) was discussed, and when resolutions were passed to the effect that the Congress was desirous that the Bill should become law. In order to show the earnestness of the workmen with regard to this subject, he might state that the railway servants gathered together by their small contributions a sum of £500, to be offered as a prize for the best railway coupling that could be found for promoting safety. It was no selfishness which led men to this idea, but it was the desire that their lives should be safe, and that what they did should be done with efficiency and security. He did not desire to waste the time of the House, because he would like to see, if possible, the measure pass. He was not a very great reader himself, but he had read in one of Lord Bacon's books that ignorance was bliss. He might say that ignorance had been bliss in his case, for when he had been travelling along the railway he had believed until lately that the block system was in universal use on our lines; but he very much feared now that that was not so. He considered that men who had to work 12 hours a-day in a signal box were engaged too long in a labour which involved the safety of the lives of human beings, and he did not believe that it would cost the Railway Companies more than at present to allow their men in the signal stations shorter hours. The Bill asked for 12 hours of work and nine hours of rest. He ventured to say that the *employé* would not get nine hours of rest, for the time would be encroached upon by family affairs and family duties. He (Mr. John Wilson) had never been in favour of class representation in that House; but he felt it would be a great advantage if they had in the House a railway man who could speak accurately of the technicalities of his trade. Many accidents happened through the coupling, recoupling, and shunting of trains, which had to be carried out within a certain time, and it was often that a man when in a hurry through his impatience placed himself in a position of danger. In the absence of an experienced railway *employé* to argue the case of the servants of the great Railway Companies, he hoped that the House would compel the Companies to adopt the best means of procuring the safety of those in their employ, and that of the general public using their lines of railway.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Channing.*)

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle) said, that the Bill had been brought before the House, in a manner which left nothing to be desired, by the hon. Member who seconded the second reading (Mr. John Wilson). The object of the Bill was one with which the House would sympathize most heartily. The hon. Member who had just sat down remarked that they wanted in that House an hon. Member who was an experienced railway man to state the case of railway *employés* to the House; but he must say that after the speech of the hon. Member the cause of the railway *employés* had lost nothing by the manner in which he had presented their case. It was not his intention to oppose the Bill in any way; but speaking on behalf of Railway Directors generally, he (Sir Joseph Pease) could say that they were most anxious to adopt every contrivance calculated to save human life. For the last 20 years, to his knowledge, the Railway Directors of the country had examined and looked into the latest and best means of preventing accidents on railways and protecting human life. He could say, speaking for his own Company—the North-Eastern—that there was no accident involving damage or loss of life that the Directors had not inquired into and probed to the very bottom; and he had no doubt that the same vigilance was exercised by other Companies. He did not believe that the Railway Directors of the country deserved to be spoken of in the manner referred to by the hon. Gentleman who had first spoken (Mr. Channing). Railway Directors had done in the past, as they were now in the present doing—they endeavoured to adopt appliances which would facilitate the traffic and help the public, and which would add to the safety of human life. As to the block system, he believed that there was not a railway in the Kingdom on which it was not in use. All those appliances which the hon. Gentleman would force upon the Companies were being most rapidly adopted; but the work meant great change and research. There was now on all the principal lines a block system in active and daily operation. The cost of the system was great. He was told of the fact that the block system on the Great Northern cost about £120,000 a-year to work it; and on the railway with which he was connected—the North-Eastern—it annually cost considerably more. The system had answered, for it facilitated the traffic, and gave greater safety. Some reference had been made to a poor line like the Somerset and Dorset line, which had never paid a dividend, and it was stated that it had not been worked on the block system; but this could not be taken as a sample of the railways throughout the country. The Railway Companies had, after long investigation, adopted and applied interlocking signals; and now on every line in the country some particular system of interlocking signals was being carried out. Then, in the course of the debate, something had been said about the continuous brakes, and one speaker said that such brakes ought to have been in use long ago. He denied that that was a fair way of putting the matter. The continuous brakes were many in principle and design. It had not been decided which was the best; and he did not suppose that the Board of Trade would undertake to settle the point as the hon. Gentleman had suggested. The Railway Companies, some time ago, sent a Commission over to France to inquire into the nature of the continuous brakes in use on the railways of that country, and they had brought over a railway van with the experimental brakes in general use, and experimented with it on the Brighton and South Coast and, he believed, the South-Eastern Railways. It was also the subject of experiments on the North-Eastern Railway. There were, as he had said, a great variety of those brakes before the public. There was the Westinghouse brake, the vacuum brake, and an automatic vacuum brake, and the brake which the hon. Gentleman had despised, known as Mr. Webb's brake. Of this latter brake he knew nothing; but Mr. Webb's shops at Crewe were the model railway shops of the day. The Companies were doing what they could in the matter to settle on the best brake. Then, as regarded the want of uniformity in the railway platforms throughout the country, every Company had its own standard for platforms; but it was impossible in some cases to have all platforms, even on the same line, of the same height. Take, for instance, the Central Station at Newcastle-on-Tyne, where the platform was much lower than the carriages; but that was an engineering necessity which could not now be easily altered. In some cases the platforms at stations had to be higher than they could be at others. As to the question of communication, the Bill provided for improved communication between guards and drivers; and he admitted that the cord system did not at present meet the requirements of the Board of Trade. No Railway Board objected to such communication, and experiments on the subject were going on from day to day by which it was hoped a better means of communication might be obtained. Then as to wide spaces near stations, it was not the fault of the Companies that this was not so, for it was only experience that had shown how needful wider spaces were. Railway stations that had at one time been in the country were now in the middle of towns, and in other places the towns extended close up to the stations, where land was difficult to procure. With regard to overtime, the question practically was between the employment of three men or two men in the 24 hours. It was only on lines where there was a great interval between the passing of the trains and where the men had one or two hours' rest at a time that only two men were employed in the 24 hours. Such a system as was proposed with regard to the Return of overtime to the Board of Trade would defeat its own object. Overtime frequently arose in matters over which there was no human control. For instance, an engine-man with his train in a fog had to put it into a siding because of the approach of a mail train, and had to remain there for a considerable period. That was a case in which a man had naturally to work overtime. He quite agreed that where a man had worked long overtime he ought to have a corresponding time to rest before going to work again. He would suggest that the Board of Trade might have power to ask, in case of complaint, for a Return of the overtime in question. His belief was that the Railway Companies had not neglected these things. But coming to the practical object of the Bill, while he admitted the loss of life on railways was appalling and much to be deplored, he denied that Railway Companies had neglected any of the provisions necessary to insure the public or their servants' safety; and, therefore, the remarks of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Channing) on that head were somewhat uncalled for—remarks which would rather tend to injure his cause than to promote it. He did not, however, object to the Bill being read a second time, if after the second reading it was fairly considered by a Select Committee, before whom those interested in the railways of the country could be heard. If any regulations by Acts of Parliament, or any increased supervision by the Board of Trade, would diminish loss of life, no objection would be raised by those who represented the railway interest in that House or anywhere else.

Mr. H. ROBERTSON (Merioneth) said, he had devoted a large part of his life to the making and promoting of railways in this country, and he must say that the great want they experienced in the working of railways was to find men who would take care to see that all signals were in good working order; and if this were done they should find that there would be fewer accidents and loss of life. When the hon. Member for Durham (Mr. John Wilson) spoke of those railway servants who exposed their lives in the discharge of their duty, he begged to say that there was one class of railway servants who devoted themselves more than any other to the public service and the preservation of human life, and that was the higher class of railway officials. He would not compare the man who had to do with the mere mechanical operation of running along the line with the man who had constructed the line safely, or who saw that the whole system of the railway was uniform, and that if any accident occurred or any change took place in the daily work of the system it had the means of adapting itself to the circumstances and providing for the safety of the public. He did not think there was a country in the world which possessed a body of men superior in ability to those of this country. He believed that from what he knew of Railway Directors they did everything that they could to make the railway system of the country free from accident and safe for the general public. All the regulations suggested in the Bill before the House were now in force on most railways; what the Bill proposed was to make them compulsory, and to throw on the Board of Trade the duty of carrying on the regulation of the railways throughout the country. He (Mr. H. Robertson) was entirely opposed to this course, because it would have the effect of doing great mischief—namely, taking away from the railway management of the country the responsibility it now undertook and discharged. The Bill before the House would appoint officers under the Board of Trade to carry out the duties prescribed in the measure. There were matters which it was better that the Board of Trade should not have the decision of, otherwise the root of railway responsibility was struck at. He had great respect for the officials of the Board of Trade; but when a new officer was appointed he would like to ask how he had got his experience? An engineer employed for years at Malta, in charge of a dock, might have had no railway experience in his life. He, for one, should object to any such change in the law. The Board of Trade had officers in the Railway Department, many of whom were men with no experience of railway matters; they were, it was true, men of education, and after blundering for a short time they obtained that information which enabled them to serve the Board of Trade. It should be remembered that there were not born railway engineers. He knew men who, after a short time, had acquired a very great knowledge of railway matters, though at first their knowledge was so deficient that it could not be of any service in railway management or control. If the Bill was to be carried, as was proposed, in its present form, everything that it provided for would have to be carried out under the Railway Department of the Board of Trade. With reference to the new proposals of the Bill in the direction of improvements, it might be well to state that most, if not all of them, were already adopted by the Railway Companies. It struck him that persons interested in the Bill might also be interested in some patents. But the practical application of what might be useful was one of the most difficult points for a Railway Manager to decide upon. There was hardly anything more difficult than to put into general application rules and regulations of a particular character to be carried out by the Board of Trade. One objectionable feature about the Bill was that it was to apply to all railways—to the great railways of the country as well as to the poor railways. There were railways and railways; and he had had something to do with getting the capital together for railways that he had been instrumental in having constructed in both North Wales and South Wales—not only as engineer and as promoter—and he could tell the House that there was great difficulty in a poor part of the country in getting the public to subscribe the capital. The landowners would be induced after a while to take shares, and then the tradesmen in the localities that would be benefited by a railway; but in the long run they always found it difficult to get the capital together. Did the House think that it would be any easier to get railways made in poor districts if this Bill were passed? The Board of Trade would, if the Bill were passed, enforce its provisions against all railways—whether they were rich or poor, extensive or limited in their mileage. The inconvenience of this would not be felt only in this country, but in nearly all the railways in Wales and Ireland, which, as the House and as Irish Members knew, were struggling concerns in many parts of those countries. The Railway Companies now coming into existence were greatly hampered by the regulations of the Board of Trade. New regulations were enforced against the new railways that were unknown on the old railways. [MR. MUNDELLA: Hear, hear!] There were new conditions with regard to bridges, and the manner in which they were to be built, and the old railways under their respective Local Acts were not liable to the new conditions and regulations. Then when a railway was made, three or four years, say, after its commencement, it was put to heavy expense in order to meet the requirements of the Board of Trade. The requirements of the Board of Trade if carried out in regard to some railways, and especially in reference to Irish railways, would involve a very heavy rate of expense, where in reality it was not wanted in the interests of the public safety. It was by no means necessary to enforce vigorously all the Board of Trade requirements over railways on which the trains ran at moderate speed, for trains travelling at a slow rate did not require the same precautions for safety as fast travelling express trains. Besides, most of the new lines made in poor districts were worked by the large Railway Companies. That was so in the district where he was acquainted with small lines. He thought it was worthy of the consideration of the Board of Trade whether there should not be a second class of railway, so that, while sufficient could be done for the public safety, the requirements might not be too great for small Companies to meet, who had, perhaps, spent all their capital. The Bill before the House would compel all railways to adopt the changes comprised in it; therefore, on that ground alone, it was faulty. He would not, however, object to the second reading of the Bill. He thought that the Bill might be referred to a Select Committee; if so, it would require a great deal of alteration, and he hoped that these points would be considered; if they were not, he thought that the Bill was one that ought not to pass.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. MUNDELLA) (Sheffield, Brightside) said: I think that at this hour it is right that I should state what course the Government propose to take with regard to this Bill. I am sure that there is not a single Member of the House who does not feel sympathy with the object sought to be attained by this Bill. The Bill is not only designed to insure greater safety for the travelling public, but also for that numerous class of railway servants who, after all, are the greatest sufferers by railway accidents. The percentage of the loss of life among railway servants in past years has been appalling, though I am glad to be able to say that it is declining. It has been so large that I think the general public hardly realizes the extent of it. I agree with my hon. Friend who has just sat down (Mr. Robertson) as to the character of the railway servants of this country. They form a vast array of 350,000 or 400,000 men, and of every man, from the Railway Manager down to the humblest porter on the line, it may be said there is not a more exemplary class of officials in any country in the world. There is among them an *esprit de corps* and a readiness to respond to any demand of the public that stands in striking contrast with the feeling of railway servants in almost every other country of the world. I have travelled myself over all the railways of Europe, and over many in America, and all I can say is that I am always glad when I get in sight of an English railway station. There is no man so ready to help you, who is so free from officialism and so unselfish in his willingness to undertake a heavy load, as the English railway servant whenever you meet him. I feel, therefore, that the House will recognize that he has every claim upon us to relieve him if we can, and to diminish his sufferings. But what I want to caution the House about is, that if we undertake legislation, we should endeavour, in our desire to be serviceable to the travelling public and to the servants of the Railway Companies, not to relieve the Railway Directors or the Companies of their responsibilities and transfer them to the Board of Trade. There is a great deal already being done in the direction of this Bill. Many of the objects sought to be attained by it are in steady process of accomplishment. My hon. Friend who brought in the Bill (Mr. Channing), and the hon. Member who so ably seconded him (Mr. John Wilson), do not deny that there is steady progress in the direction of the Bill. Further, my hon. Friend does not demand that the provisions of the Bill, if they become an Act, should be put in force immediately in all cases, because that would be, as he knows, an absolute impossibility. I should like to point out to the House some of the justifications for the measure. There is no doubt we have done what we can in this House to diminish loss of life amongst the working classes by the Factory and Workshop Acts. The effect of all that legislation has been for the general good of the whole community. When I come to read to the House some of the statistics relating to railway servants the House will see that the calamities which befall them do not affect the individual merely, but his family and those dependent upon him. During the last 11 years the total number of railway servants killed in the service of the Railway Companies amounted to 6,584, the total number injured was 26,012. The total, it is clear, amounts to the losses sustained in many battles. There is no doubt that many of the deaths are not preventible. They come from the railway servant taking risks to which he has been accustomed in the desire to perform his duty promptly. On the other hand, a great number come from causes which are preventible. I am glad to tell the House that these calamities during the last 11 years show a steady diminution year by year. The number of passengers killed while travelling on the railway in 1874 was 76; in 1875, 17; and in 1879, 75. To show how steady has been the diminution, I will read the list from 1880. In 1880 there were 29; in 1881, 23; in 1882, 18; in 1883, 11; in 1884, 31; and in 1885, 6. So that there was a steady diminution, although during the same period there was a large increase of passengers. The number of passengers killed while travelling was in 1874 one in 5,500,000, the number in 1880 fell to one in 20,000,000, and in 1885 to one in 116,000,000. The number injured in 1874 was 1,613; in 1875, 1,212; in 1878, 1,173; in 1880, 904; in 1881, 987; in 1882, 802; in 1883, 662; in 1884, 660; and in 1885, 435; the number in the last year being the least ever known. If I take the number of railway servants killed the same thing obtains. The number in 1874 was 46, and in 1884 it came down to 13. The number injured in 1874 was 271, and in 1885, 81. The percentage of injured was in 1874 as one in 70, and in 1885 it was one in 163. Undoubtedly the number is still too high, but it is satisfactory to feel there is a diminution. The Bill of my hon. Friend is not a Bill which compels the Board of Trade to take prompt action in all cases. It is a Bill conferring large discretionary powers, which, if the House does confer them, will require to be exercised with great discretion. I agree that the block system which substitutes an interval of space for an interval of time is one of the greatest possible preventives of accidents. It ought to be in operation throughout the whole railway system of the country. It is being introduced to a very large extent. I will tell my hon. Friend to what extent the block system now obtains. On the 31st of December, 1885, it prevailed on double line railways extending to 9,583 miles out of a total of 10,479 miles, or on over 92 per cent of the whole system. It may be said, Why should it not be imposed on the remaining 8 or 9 per cent? The answer is that these railways are very poor, and that it would be very difficult for them to raise the money to accomplish all those changes. No doubt the Board of Trade finds itself sometimes in a difficult position for enforcing its decrees. I know of two Railway Companies running side by side, one of which was well equipped and had all the necessary arrangements for safe working, and the other was as badly equipped as it could possibly be. What was to be done? There were accidents again and again. The Directors were paying no dividends, and as a result there was no interlocking signal at work on their line. When my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) was President of the Board of Trade there were two or three accidents on that line. He had no power to enforce interlocking signals, and he had no power to interfere until an application for further powers was made. Then by his resoluteness he was enabled to insist on those necessary parts of the equipment of the line being carried out. This Bill proposes to give us powers to enforce the provision of interlocking signals, double lines, and continuous brakes. The House will recognize that the Board of Trade is eager rather to take too much responsibility than to shirk it; but I feel somewhat reluctant to take all the responsibility which this Bill would put on the Board. There are powers which I think the House might with safety confer and apply; but there are powers also which I think the Board ought not to be pressed to exercise. There is one to raise all the platforms to a standard height on the London and North-Western Railway. That would involve an enormous outlay, and, after all, it is doubtful if the outlay would give greater safety.

MR. CHANNING said, he admitted that the clause of the Bill was badly drawn, and he would be willing to excise that portion of it.

MR. MUNDELLA: I am glad of it. Then as to coupling appliances, I do not think it would be well to make the Board of Trade the judges in this matter of deciding what improved coupling appliances should be used. I do not see any objection to furnishing a Return of the overworking of railway servants. Those long hours are a great source of danger. There is no harm in making this Return to the Board of Trade. I do not think I should be justified in refusing to give the Bill a second reading. I hope the House will agree to the second reading, and to have the Bill then sent to a Committee upstairs, where the railway servants and the Directors can be heard. I have no doubt that by that means the object of my hon. Friend will be attained.

MR. E. STANHOPE (Lincolnshire, Hardcastle) said, he objected to the way in which the responsibility would be divided by this Bill between the Board of Trade and the Railway Companies. There were some powers contained in this Bill which it would be unwise to give to the Board of Trade, and which would have the effect of stopping invention among railway engineers, and stereotyping present systems. In conferring increased powers on a Department of the State, two conditions ought carefully to be examined. The first was that they did not unduly diminish the responsibility of the Railway Companies, and the second that the powers that were proposed to be intrusted to the Department should be reasonable. He entirely agreed with the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Mundella) that the clauses of this Bill required very careful consideration, and he therefore cordially approved of the proposal to refer the measure, after it had been read a second time, to a Select Committee.

MR. CHANNING said, that he had much pleasure in agreeing with the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Mundella) that the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee.

MR. PLUNKET (Dublin University) said, that he did not rise for the purpose of opposing the second reading of this Bill, understanding that it would be referred to a Select Committee. He entirely sympathized with its main object—namely, the protection of the lives of railway servants. He believed that by that method of procedure the objects which the promoters of the Bill had in view might possibly be attained. He rose only to protest against the extraordinary statement by the Mover of the Bill, that the London and North-Western Railway Company were using an "antediluvian kind of brake" over a great portion of their line. As a Director of the Company he was able to say that from the first they had spared no pains or expense in securing the best brake they could get, and in the opinion of the highest authorities the brake they were now applying was the very best which had yet been invented. He thought the London and North-Western was one of the very last Companies to be charged with indifference to the public safety. They laid down four lines of rails with special regard to that consideration, when, perhaps, they would not have done so if they had consulted only the interests of their shareholders. He repudiated with amazement the charge which the hon. Member, without any special knowledge or title to speak on the subject, had thought fit to bring against that Company, on whose behalf he was not at all afraid of the closest examination and inquiry. It was to the interest of Railway Companies, above all others, to prevent accidents occurring upon their lines.

Mr. C. S. PARKER (Perth) said, as one of the backers of the Bill, he must express his satisfaction with the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella), and that the Government were going to support the second reading of this Bill, seeing that during the last 10 years the number of persons killed on our railways was 6,000, while the number of persons maimed was 26,000. He had no doubt the Select Committee, with the assistance of the special knowledge of the Railway Directors and other experts, would be able to improve some clauses. The points objected to by the Government were not of principal importance. He hoped the Committee would be promptly appointed, and that it would get to work at once, so that the Bill might become law in the present Session.

Mr. J. C. BOLTON (Stirling) said, he had no doubt the Select Committee would deal with the Bill satisfactorily. He desired most distinctly and clearly to express his great sympathy with the object of the Bill, which was, in so many words, to effect the greater safety on railways both of passengers and railway servants; but he did not concur with the facts, so-called, stated by the hon. Member who moved the second reading (Mr. Channing), and he certainly did not concur in some of his deductions. The hon. Member said compensation for accidents had had no effect on Railway Directors and shareholders; but he would remind him of a serious accident which happened recently on the line he was connected with—the Caledonian Company—which involved a cost to the Railway Company of £55,000, while the fares in the train which suffered were only about £10. That cost represented about 1 per cent of dividend, and he could assure the hon. Gentleman that 1 per cent was a matter of considerable importance to the shareholders. He hoped the suggestion would be taken into account that there might be two classes of railways. The Bill was a proposal practically to confer upon the officers of the Board of Trade the decision of what should be the arrangement for working railways, and he would impress upon the House that even officials of the Board of Trade were human, and were not always of one mind. At one period they recommended and insisted upon one thing, and later on they changed their views, or new men came in, and different arrangements were imposed. All he wished to do at present was to call attention to the fact that the Bill required very great alteration. He wished to say a word as to the care taken by some Railway Companies at least to reduce to a minimum the loss of life. The Company with which he was connected some 12 or 15 years ago resolved to establish a premium fund for the avoidance of accidents. The Caledonian Company had instituted a system of issuing cards to their servants. Every servant of the Company, whose duty permitted him to cause or enabled him to prevent an accident, on entering their service received a card; and if at the end of the year a card was presented to his superior without a complaint upon it—that was to say, that he had not contributed in any way to an accident—a certain sum was paid to the holder. In this way the Company had during the last 15 years paid an average sum of £10,000 per annum as a reward for strict attention to the regulations of the Company.

Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities) said, he wished to say one practical word as to accidents, having had considerable experience in dealing with them from an impartial point of view—namely, the professional point of view. His experience had led him to the conclusion that it was not so much a question of machinery or arrangement, as that two things were too often neglected. One was the ascertainment that the servants were properly educated to the use of the appliances which they had to work. The other was the servants not being sufficiently imbued with the notion that it was by blind mechanical obedience to the rules laid down that the safety of the public was secured. He had known many cases, both on sea and land, in which accidents had occurred because rules were neglected in the misplaced confidence that others would observe rules laid down for them. A broke his rule, trusting to B observing his, and B taking the same course, accident followed.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee.

PARLIAMENTARY VOTERS (REGISTRATION) BILL.—[Bill 100.]

(*Sir Julian Goldsmid, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Robson, Mr. McIver.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir Julian Goldsmid.*)

And it being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Further Proceeding on Second Reading stood adjourned till *To-morrow.*

MARRIED WOMEN (MAINTENANCE IN CASE OF DESERTION) BILL.

(*Mr. Pulley, Mr. Thomas Blake, Mr. Winterbotham, Mr. Warmington.*)

[BILL 111.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power to extend the provisions of the Bill to the maintenance of children deserted by their father.—(*Mr. Warmington.*)

Further Proceeding on going into Committee *deferred* till *Wednesday* 2nd June.

MOTIONS.

BARRISTERS AT LAW AND ADVOCATES (FEES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Boord, Bill to enable Barristers at Law and Advocates to recover their Fees and to render them liable at law to persons employing them, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Boord, Mr. Ingram, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Lawson, and Mr. Hanbury.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 219.]

DISTRESS FOR RENT AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Burt, Bill to amend the Law of Distress for Rent, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Burt, Mr. Arthur Williams, Mr. William Cook, and Mr. Robson.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 220.]

POST OFFICE SITES BILL.

Mr. Spencer, Mr. Gerald Balfour, and Viscount Lymington were *nominated* Members of the Select Committee on the Post Office Sites Bill.

House adjourned at five minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 20th May, 1886.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*First Reading*—Oxford University (Justices) * (119).

Second Reading—Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2) (95); West Indian Incumbered Estates * (115); British North America * (116).

Second Reading—Committee negatived—Customs and Inland Revenue * (112).

Committee—Companies Acts Amendment * (82-121); Bankruptcy (Agricultural Labourers' Wages) * (70).

Third Reading—Incumbents of Benefices Loans Extension * (89), and *passed.*

CROFTERS (SCOTLAND) (No. 2) BILL.

(*The Earl of Dalhousie.*)

(NO. 95.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (The Earl of Dalhousie), in moving that the Bill be read a second time, said, that the subject was one of very great and very pressing importance. He believed that in one sense it was new to their Lordships' House, because it had never been formally under their notice; but in another sense it could not be regarded as new, because their Lordships could hardly be unaware of the discussions that had taken place in the Press and "elsewhere" upon this very delicate and difficult question. For some time past, as the House knew, the population in certain parts of the

Highlands and Islands of Scotland had been in a dissatisfied and discontented condition—a condition owing, no doubt, partly to the distress arising from the natural poverty of the country, and partly arising from causes which Parliament might, perhaps, do something to mitigate. In March, 1883, a Royal Commission was appointed for the express purpose of inquiring into the condition and grievances of the crofters and cottars of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. That Commission reported in the month of April, 1884, and in summing up their Report they described the feeling which they found prevalent among the crofters in the following remarkable words:—

> "The aspect of the present and the future calmly considered presents the following features:—The dissatisfaction of the small tenants in regard to their position is of native origin, but it is fomented by external influences. The land movement in the Highlands, even if it were not spontaneously maintained by the people themselves, would be aroused to action by other forces; it is impelled by the democratic and social aspirations prevalent among various classes at home, and will probably enlist the sympathies of Highlanders in all parts of the world."

The Commission made certain specific recommendations with a view to the mitigation and, if possible, the removal of the causes of discontent which were susceptible of being removed by legislation. They made recommendations with regard to land tenure, fisheries, and communications, education, with respect to some extent to the administration of justice, with regard to game and deer forests, and emigration. This Bill was partly based on the recommendations of the Commission. Matters connected with the improvement of the means of communication between the different parts of the Highlands and Islands, with education, and the administration of justice were not dealt with in the Bill because they had been already partly dealt with, and it was administration, not legislation, which was required for the purpose; neither was emigration for a reason he would explain by-and-bye if their Lordships desired. He did not say that the Bill contained everything recommended by the Commission; but it contained everything which, in the opinion of the Government, it ought to contain. It did not meet the extreme views of some advocates of the crofters' claims; but no legislation short of what was absolutely revolutionary, and not based on principles not a bit more applicable to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland than to any part of Great Britain could possibly satisfy them. But the Government thought it met the reasonable grievances and claims of the crofters so far as they could be dealt with by legislation. The Bill was mainly a Land Bill, and was intended to improve the *status* and condition of the crofters so far as could be done without inflicting injustice upon others. He wished to impress upon their Lordships the extreme urgency of passing this Bill without delay, if they approved it. Some legislation, it was agreed on all hands, was absolutely necessary. On that point there was a general consensus of opinion. The question was whether the Bill was right and proper and fitted to grapple with conditions of things it was intended to meet. If their Lordships came to that decision and thought the Bill should pass, he would ask them to come to this further conclusion, that it ought to be passed as rapidly as possible. The appointment of the Royal Commission in 1883, the general tenour of its Report in the following year, and, above all, the Resolution passed in the House of Commons in November, 1884, had led the crofters to form expectations—and they had been encouraged to form expectations—that it would result in some beneficial legislation on their behalf. That expectation had been fostered by political agitators for the last two or three years, until it assumed in certain parts altogether unreasonable proportions—proportions which he was afraid no legislation that Parliament would pass was likely to satisfy. The minds of the people were fairly unsettled. In many cases payment not only of rent, but of poor rates and school rates, was so much in arrear as to argue a condition of things, to say the least, extremely unsatisfactory. The Government were most anxious, as he was sure their Lordships were also, that a more wholesome and healthy state of things should be brought about. He was not exaggerating when he said that but for the length of time during which the expectations of the people of the West Highlands had been kept on the stretch —a fact which was very important in the case — the existing condition of things in certain districts would argue widespread demoralization of an alarming character. His Predecessor in Office (Mr. Trevelyan) three months ago expressed the following strong opinion:—

> "It is high time the present state of things should stop. But it was high time that Parliament having expressed a strong opinion in favour of remedial legislation should carry its opinion into effect."

Since then matters had become worse. He asked their Lordships especially to pay attention to this, because it formed a strong argument in favour of legislation of some kind. In November, 1884, the House of Commons passed the following Resolution:—

> "Resolved, that in the opinion of this House it is the duty of Her Majesty's Government to give effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission upon the condition of the crofters and cottiers in the Higlands and Islands of Scotland; to apply such other remedies as it seems advisable. That this House concurs in the opinion expressed by the Commission, on page 110 of its Report, that the mere vindication of authority and repression of resistance would not establish relations of mutual confidence between landlord and tenant."

He would go further than Mr. Trevelyan, and say that, having so strongly expressed its opinion that legislation was required, it was impossible, practically, for any Government which was dependent for its power — as all Governments in this country were — entirely on public opinion, vigorously to enforce the law until the law was altered to meet the grievance which Parliament admitted to exist. It was absolutely necessary, for the sake of law and order, that either this Bill, or some other Bill, should be passed, and passed quickly, into law. He hoped their Lordships would see that it was his duty to try to persuade them that it was not only desirable to pass the Bill quickly, but, if possible, to pass it without mutilation of any of the more important provisions. If he might make a suggestion, he would like to say that their Lordships ought to remember that they were a House of landlords, and that it would become them well to take a generous view of things. He hoped they would not make more Amendments in detail than were absolutely necessary, because that might go a long way to rob the measure of its grace. Last year the Government introduced a Crofters Bill, and had they remained in Office they would doubtless have passed it into law; but the hanging up of the Crofter Question for another year was one of the minor results of the change of Government last summer. The Bill of last year was, however, in many respects less complete than the present Bill, for it proposed to give only fixity of tenure, fair rent, and compensation for improvements. But the present Bill provided also for increase of crofts, both arable and pasture, for loans to be advanced by the Treasury, through the Fishery Board, and for developing the fishing industry. That last point was very hopeful, and though that provision did not occupy a very large portion of the Bill, it was to his mind one of the most important in the whole measure. Formerly the manufacture of kelp was a very important industry in Scotland. About the beginning of the century the price of kelp was £20 or £22 a ton, and it was a means of livelihood for the crofters and cottars. The Western Islands produced about 20,000 tons annually of the value of from £400,000 to £440,000. When the abolition of the Salt Duties lowered the price from £22 to £2 a-ton the great industry was destroyed, and the condition of the people was very much and very suddenly lowered. That fact should count for something when considering the claims of those people. It was impossible for the people to foresee and provide for a contingency of that kind. The means of communication in that part of the country were very scanty; and it was, therefore, extremely difficult for them to adapt themselves to the industries that might be springing up. That one fact alone should at all events count for something when considering the claims of the crofter population to exceptional legislation; and he thought it was obvious if they could by any means facilitate the creation of a new industry that would take the place of the kelp industry they should be doing something to replace the crofters in the same favourable position which it was alleged they occupied in the olden time, and, at the same time, they should be doing a very laudable and desirable thing in itself, and from a public point of view; and, in regard to that point, the development of the fishing industry offered a prospect of very great hope. The development of the fishing industry was of great promise, and the fishing grounds in the neighbourhood Westward of the Hebrides were of unusual fertility and very valuable. In order that the fisheries might be properly worked and developed more boats were wanted; and the Bill proposed to advance money, through the Fishery Board, to the fishermen for the purchase of boats and gear. They were not without practical, and he thought very valuable, experience on that point. The Highland Fisheries Company was a Company formed a year-and-a-half ago for the purpose of advancing money to fishermen for the purpose of boats, and hitherto their experiment had been extremely successful. It was likely to be very much more successful when the means of communication had been further improved, and the Government had that point at this moment under consideration. That Company advanced money to crofters—men, of course, selected after due and careful inquiry—and they charged 3 per cent on the money advanced. Between January and July, 1885, money was advanced to 22 fishermen, and the total sum advanced was £4,027. Of that total sum advanced there was repaid up to the present time £2,694. That was to say, the average sum advanced to each fisherman was £183, and the average sum repaid was £122. These results were full of hope in the future for the fishing industry, and gave the Government good ground to proceed upon when they contemplated the advancement of loans for the purpose of developing the fishing industry. Perhaps the most prominent and important feature of the Bill was that which proposed to give more land to the crofters and prescribed the manner in which that was to be done. Much had been said on both sides as to the historical justification for the Bill, and especially as to this particular provision. It had been objected that there was no historical ground whatever for the exceptional treatment of the districts and holdings dealt with by the Bill. For his own part, he would be very sorry to push the historical argument too far; and he would only say in regard to it that although there might have been no legal rights of grazing which the clansmen in old days could enforce in a Court of Law, yet in those districts to which the Bill applied there was undoubtedly, speaking generally, an undisturbed exercise by the clansmen of the enjoyment of pasturage for their cattle. It must, of course, be admitted that in particular cases and in particular circumstances this enjoyment was sometimes interfered with by the chiefs of the clan. Yet under normal conditions the custom and practice of the country amounted to something very like practical continuity of occupancy. This Bill was intended to give legal sanction and efficacy to those previous customary enjoyments, and even to extend them where possible without injustice to other people. In some cases the sub-division of houses and the over-crowding of townships had been the work of the crofters themselves; but it had not always been entirely the work of the crofters themselves. In some cases it had been due to the action of the landlords. This Bill made it impossible that such action should occur in the future. The Bill gave facilities for the improvement of the condition of the crofters, and put it out of the power of owners to take any steps for subdivision prejudicial to the interests of the crofters. Of course it might be objected that this was very grandmotherly legislation, but a wise grandmother might do good. The question before the House was whether or not the Bill was suited to the circumstances of the crofters, and it seemed to him to be an absurd argument to say that the principles of legislation were equally applicable to all classes of society. It had always seemed to him absurd to argue that the same principles of legislation were equally applicable to all populations alike, no matter how widely they differed as to the stage of development at which they had arrived. He submitted that the history of the Highlands, the difficulty of access to some portions, the imperfect means of communication, and the peculiar difficulties against which people had to contend and struggle against for many years afforded an ample justification for the Bill, even if it were not necessary in fulfilment of the promise already given by Parliament and to set at rest the minds of the population, which had been recently so much exercised on the subject, in regard to the provisions of the measure. He admitted readily enough that the provision with regard to the enlargement of the crofters' holdings was a novel provision; but he submitted that it was absolutely necessary in the present state of things. If voluntary agreement would have sufficed for the solution of this question, the necessity for this clause would not have arisen; and for his part he hoped and expected that the application to the State would lead to many voluntary agreements being made, which would not otherwise have been made. In framing this part of the Bill the Government had constantly before them the recommendations of the Royal Commissioners, and had, so far as was possible, followed them. He did not wish to throw the responsibility for the Bill on the Royal Commissioners; but a presumption was raised in favour of this provision when it closely corresponded with the recommendations of the Commissioners, and when the view of Her Majesty's Government coincided with the view of the Commissioners. The working of this measure would be intrusted to certain Land Commissioners, three in number. They would occupy a position somewhat similar to that of the Commissioners under the Irish Land Act. One Commissioner must be a trained lawyer of eminence; the other two would, he supposed, be practical men, and one of the three must be able to speak Gaelic. These Commissioners would be intrusted with the power of fixing rent, the amount of compensation, and the powers requisite to give effect to the provision in the Bill with regard to the enlargement of holdings, as well as the power of determining summarily whether individuals were or were not crofters within the meaning of the Act. One other point he wished to draw attention to was that the Bill as it came to this House was substantially the same Bill as was first introduced in the House of Commons in the early part of the Session. Her Majesty's Government had been firm and consistent in adhering to the principles embodied in the Bill, and had resisted, and, on the whole, successfully resisted, Amendments, from whatever quarter, that seemed to trench on the lines they had marked out for themselves. He need hardly say, in the other House of Parliament the pressure was chiefly concerned in extending and enlarging the scope of the Bill in various ways, and he had had numerous communications and a variety of correspondence on this point, and in certain quarters there appeared a vague opinion that the Government might as well have done more for the crofters than they have done in the Bill. Suggestions had not been wanting that the Government ought to have been more generous in dealing with them; but this Bill was based upon a recognition of the peculiar history and circumstances of the crofter population, and if they deviated from it in the direction of what was called going further, they would have to proceed on altogether different principles. These principles, if they admitted them, would carry them very far indeed, and they would find themselves face to face with very large questions indeed—questions which had no special application to the Highlands of Scotland, but which were equally applicable to any other part of Great Britain, or, indeed, of the civilized world. On the other hand, it was absolutely necessary to go as far as the Government had gone, and he hoped their Lordships would not ask the Government to make any serious modifications in the measure. The Government were not infallible, and he did not assert in their behalf that the Bill was incapable of amendment in detail. Indeed, he himself intended to propose one or two Amendments—one rather an important one; but he did assert that, taken in connection with what had been, and, he hoped, might yet be done in regard to education, and especially in regard to improved means of communication, this Bill fairly met the requirements of the case of the crofter population. That was the population with which they had to deal, and on these grounds he hoped their Lordships would give the Bill a second reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Earl of Dalhousie.*)

LORD NAPIER AND ETTRICK said, he trusted that the position he had recently held in connection with this question as Chairman of the Royal Commission on the Crofters would justify him in submitting his opinion of the merits of the Bill now before them. The main provisions of the Bill were those relating to official rent, fixity of tenure, compulsory enlargement of the holdings, and State aid to the fishing industry. With regard to the first, he thought that he might affirm that the State, in interfering to assess the rental of land, engaged in an interference with freedom of contract and rights of property, which could only be justified by great abuse, or by the hope of doing a great amount of good. Therefore, it became very important to ascertain whether in the case before them there had been such a prevalence of excessive rent; and whether, in the proposed change, there was a prospect of the advantage he had indicated. In the evidence before the Royal Commission there were a great number of complaints as to excessive rent; but they were not pressed or urged in a very earnest or convincing manner; they were not presented with that persistency or passion which frequently accompanied the complaints in regard to the restriction of the area of the holdings; nor were the complaints as to rent supported by impartial or independent testimony, so as to produce any convincing impression on the minds of the Commission. They were informed that on some crofts rents had not been raised for many years; on some not for a whole generation. In other cases rents had been raised in the same proportion on the small holdings as had been the case in other parts of Scotland on larger farms, and in some peculiarly exceptional cases of excessive rent it was not shown that the increase had always been exacted. Under those circumstances, the Commissioners did not conceive that the complaint of excessive rent was one of a crying or urgent nature. On a general view of the whole question of rents in the Highlands and Islands, it did not seem to them that the case had been made out of a persistent and general abuse which would justify the intervention of the State with the rights of property; but if this innovation were inevitable, it would be at least consolatory if they could feel that the adoption of the system of official rents would involve any substantial or practical improvement. He could not entertain an impression that the great majority of the crofters paid rents varying from £2 to £5. Taking the precedent of Ireland, they might assume there would be a general reduction of rents to the extent of 25 per cent if the Scottish Commissioners were as liberal as the Irish; but even such a reduction of a £3 rental only would be 15*s*—1-40th or 50th part of the aggregate revenue or earning of the family. Such a remission might diffuse a certain amount of gratification, and enable crofters to make some useful purchase of personal indulgence; but such remissions could not have the slightest influence in raising or elevating the social or economic condition of the crofter as a farmer, a mechanic, or a fisherman. In the case of a great number of crofters, though rent was abolished altogether, it would make no substantial alteration in the condition of the people. Referring to the depopulation which took place in the Highlands at the end of last and the beginning of the present century, he said that even in the case of the best-intentioned of the proprietors their action had not been justified by the change. The result of those unfortunate transactions had been the foundation in the country of a dark tradition and resentment amongst the people, and also, in some cases, it had led to positive distress. He thought the Government had acted wisely in dealing with the question of the enlargement of holdings. The opinion of all classes and conditions of men who gave testimony before the Commission agreed in this—that the existing holdings were too small. On the question of fixity of tenure, however, he had never heard on the part of any one of the Gentlemen with whom he was associated on the Commission any opinion in favour of fixity of tenure in the unqualified and extreme form in which fixity of tenure had been adopted in the Bill before the House; nor did he ever hear the principle of fixity of tenure in the same absolute shape recommended by any persons outside the Commission who were in an independent and impartial position. The general opinion regarding it seemed to be that the concession would be fraught with very considerable social and economic objections—that it might tend to confirm the national lethargy, attach the crofters more strongly to the soil, and increase the dangers of sub-division and squatting; so that the Commissioners did not feel themselves justified in recommending the principle of fixity of tenure, and to the resolution of the Commissioners on the subject he still heartily adhered. That opinion at the time was confirmed by the impression that as fixity of tenure was the negation of proprietary rights, so it would very likely become the negation of all proprietary duties. If that principle were applied to the whole population of the

Highlands and Islands, they would run a great risk of depriving them of the counsels and control of the owner of the soil, which were so valuable, and abolish, so far as the law could do so, all that remained of mutual affection, good offices, and material assistance, which it was desirable to encourage instead of destroy. In destroying the proprietor as a moral agent, they destroyed a powerful instrument for preventing evil and promoting good. It would surely be better to preserve the proprietor, encouraging, enabling, and compelling him to do his duty. He knew that it might be contended that with a moderate official rent and fixity of tenure the occupiers would themselves undertake improvements, favoured by the stabilities of their position. He did not undervalue the benefits attached to a prolonged interest in the holding. Those benefits were apparent even under a terminable lease; they would be most apparent when connected with absolute property; they would still be apparent in the half-way condition of fixity of tenure, where such tenure was bestowed and enjoyed under favourable conditions. The small tenant on the mainland, or even in some of the Southern Islands, who practised a civilized husbandry, who was surrounded by good examples, who had access to the materials for improvements, to the great markets of purchase and sale, was suited for such a tenure and would profit by it; but the mass of the poor crofting population in Skye, in the Long Island, and along the shores of the North-Western Highlands would, he apprehended, be incompetent without the directions and contributions of the proprietor to contrive, undertake, and prosecute works of common or individual utility, which were indispensable to their higher welfare. It might still, however, be argued that fixity of tenure was necessary to prevent arbitrary eviction. That might have been a valid argument 60 years ago; but it was a valid argument no longer. There was no arbitrary eviction in the Highlands now. Eviction was only used, or only threatened, to enforce the payment of rent; and under the Bill it could still be used for that purpose, and would, perhaps, be used with greater right. It was only due to the honesty and candour of the noble Earl who moved the second reading to admit that in recommending the adoption of the principle of judicial rents and fixity of tenure he did not contend there was any abuse at the present moment, either with reference to the amount of rent or the practice of eviction. The last provision in the Bill which claimed special attention was the grant for fisheries. The sum was not large—he believed only £10,000—but of that he did not complain. The object was excellent, but it must be approached with great circumspection; and £10,000 tentatively applied, and applied with success, might do some positive good, and justify a more liberal appropriation hereafter. The greatest defect in the Bill—he meant the greatest want—was the absence of any provision for emigration under Government encouragement and control; for without some such measure all other remedies in the congested regions of the country would be ineffectual. He believed, however, that the noble Earl the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Earl Granville) had held out some hope that this question would be considered by Her Majesty's Government hereafter in another measure and on a larger scale. He agreed with what had fallen from the noble Earl (the Earl of Dalhousie) in respect to the question of enlargement of holdings. The Commissioners, proceeding on this evidence and on their own experience and observation, resolved that the first and greatest object should be the extension and the improvement of crofters' holdings by the various and complete methods and expedients which are embodied in their Report; and a majority of the Commissioners determined that among those methods should be included a power of compulsory extension, in the absence of spontaneous arrangements between the proprietor and the occupier. He asked whether the question of enlargement, as well as the questions of rent and of tenure, might not be left to free adjustment between the parties concerned? He hoped the claim to enlargement would be settled by free adjustment; but it appeared to him that in this case the power of compulsion should be held in reserve. There was not the least fear of rack-rents or of wanton eviction. The proprietors would in any case now treat their poor tenants with humanity and indulgence; but it was not so certain that the proprietors would, without some powerful impulse, undertake the rather difficult and complex task of enlarging and remodelling the smaller holdings. This was a case in which he thought the power of compulsion should be held in reserve. In this question of enlargement he thought that he, personally, could not be suspected of prepossession or prejudice. He had himself been a proprietor of land from his earliest years, and his interests and affections were identified with the land. It might be said that they conceded enlargement—they even conceded compulsory enlargement; but how would the small tenant be able to avail himself of the new privilege? Would he be able to occupy and stock his additional land? He was not very sanguine of great, extensive, and rapid social improvements by legislation. The labouring people must work out their own salvation by personal industry, integrity, and thrift. It would be idle to suppose that a poor crofting community, with a very contracted area of common pasture, would be able suddenly to take over a large farm, to take over the stock at a valuation price, and to pay the rent which was formerly paid by the sheep farmer in good years. It would also be idle to suppose that an individual crofter who, up to the present time, had paid a rent of from £2 to £5 a-year would suddenly be able to undertake a croft of the annual value of £15 a-year, and to do justice to the proprietor and to the soil. The method and manner in which additional land could be alone conferred with advantage on the small tenant was by the enlargement of the common pasture, by the appropriation of a portion of the adjacent land, together with some moderate portion of land susceptible of tillage, or susceptible of feeding stock. Regarded in this practical and moderate form, he believed that small tenants would be able gradually to occupy and stock these large holdings. He thought this concession would be very highly valued by them, and it would be very beneficial to them, on one condition, and that was that the evils of squatting and sub-division were prevented; and he thought that in that respect the provisions of the present Bill were very strong. He thought that the question of the enlargement of holdings could be better carried out in the absence of the provision for fixity of tenure, for this reason—that the proprietor in possession of his own prerogatives, who was well-intentioned by his tenants, would be able to use his authority, his control, and his advice in the recasting and remodelling of these large holdings, which he would not be able to do under the present system. That duty was, more or less, delegated by the Bill to Commissioners, who would not understand it so well as the proprietor; but he considered the enlargement of holdings was such an important question, that even under any disadvantage it was the principal object they should have at heart; and he could not help expressing his gratitude to Her Majesty's Government for having had the courage to embody this provision in the Bill. Up to the present time he had spoken in the interest of the crofters. He would leave to others—perhaps to his noble Friend on the Cross Benches (the Earl of Wemyss), or the noble Duke behind him—to speak in the interest of the proprietors. He might be permitted, however, to say that he did not think that the material interests of the proprietor were really seriously affected by the provisions of the Bill, as, in his opinion, the proprietor would not have got more from his land under any circumstances than he would get under its provisions. In his judgment, the Bill contained some provisions which were illusory, and some provisions which were even mischievous, as well as being pernicious. He was obliged to confess, with sorrow and confusion, that the very provisions which he deprecated were the provisions which the crofters had been taught to covet, and which the public in Scotland had learned to applaud. Those provisions might not be wise; but they were popular and acceptable, and he feared they were unavoidable. He could only express the hope that, if adopted, they might prove instrumental towards conciliation and peace; and that they might help to restore the population, who had many interesting and attractive qualities, to their normal condition of morality and order.

The Duke of ARGYLL said, the noble Lord who had just spoken had apparently assumed that he was one of the few Members of that House who would speak upon that subject in the interest of the crofters, and had observed that he would leave to others the duty of speaking in the interests of the proprietors. He could assure the noble Lord that they on that side of the House, and on the other side as well, who were proprietors of land in the Highlands, were quite as anxious to assist the crofters as any of those demagogues who had been inciting them. They desired to see the crofters a prosperous people. They had worked for that end, many of them for years, and they would be very glad if the Legislature could see its way to pass any measure which would really have the effect of permanently improving their condition. His noble Friend (the Earl of Dalhousie) who had charge of the measure always dealt with every matter which was committed to his hands with singular judgment and discretion, and he was not sure that he had ever shown that judgment and discretion better than he had done that night. He spoke with great moderation and good temper on every point; but he skimmed with infinite agility over the thinnest ice. The Bill belonged either to the category of measures which they should discuss upon their own merits, or to the category of measures which they could discuss only with reference to the political situation in which they found themselves. He was bound to confess that he would not oppose the second reading of this Bill, not because he thought it was a good Bill on its merits, but on account of the position in which they were placed. He said distinctly that, on its merits, the Bill might be denominated by a new title. It would be no travesty of what he believed would be the effect of this measure to call it a Bill to arrest agricultural improvements in certain counties in Scotland. That would be an accurate title for the Bill. In order to show that he was not speaking vaguely or at random, or out of mere antipathy to any new principle adopted by Parliament, he would direct the attention of the House to one broad feature of the Bill, and of the speeches which had been made in favour of it. The Bill, as it had been pointed out to them, proposed to advance public money for the benefit of crofters as regarded their fishing avocations; but it did not propose to advance money to the extent even of a single shilling for agricultural purposes. He wanted to point out to the House the effect of that. Mr. Trevelyan, in his speech in "another place," dwelt at great length upon that point, and said he was not prepared to recommend Parliament to advance public money to crofters for agricultural purposes. The right hon. Gentleman said—and he (the Duke of Argyll) could not gainsay the argument—that he did not see why the small tenant on the West Coast of Scotland had more claim on the public purse than the small tenant in any other part of Scotland who might be suffering from agricultural distress, or, indeed, than the small tradesmen, who were now suffering great distress. Mr. Trevelyan put his foot down on that at once, and said he would be no party to the advance of public money for agricultural speculation of that kind; and it was surmised at the time that Mr. Trevelyan had in his mind, when he made that speech, other proposals which were likely to be before Parliament with regard to another country. He asked them to look at this Bill fairly and closely, and they would find that one of the clauses of the Bill distinctly deprived the crofter of his access to the capital of the landlord. They refused to the crofter one shilling of public money, and they put him under such conditions that he could not get one shilling from his landlord. Did they think that that was for the benefit of the crofter, and that it would tend to the improvement of land in Scotland? The 5th clause said that a new agreement might be made between the landlord and the tenant, but that the agreement would hold so long as one of the parties did not apply to the Land Court for a revision. Let him point out how that operated. Two years ago the tenants on his property in the Island of Tiree came to him and said—"Will you help us to drain and fence this land?" He said—"Certainly I will, if you pay me a moderate percentage on the outlay." In that Island, and in many parts of the Highlands, there were plenty of rocks but no stones, and the fences had to be made with wire at great cost. These poor crofters were not able to lay out that money; but they were perfectly willing to pay to the landlord interest on his outlay. He told those crofters he would be very glad to help them, and a year and a-half ago the work was done. This year they asked him to proceed with the work; but he said—"I am sorry I cannot do that, till I see what Parliament is going to do with my freedom of contract with you." If this Bill were passed he should have to say to these crofters—"My friends, Parliament has prohibited you from making any binding contract with me on that. You may promise your 4 or 5 per cent upon this outlay; but you cannot bind even yourselves, still less can you bind your successors in the farm." Under these circumstances he should be obliged to say—"I am very sorry Parliament has put you in the position of children or fools, and has put me in a position in which I cannot lay out any capital with any security. You must fence and drain the farm for yourselves." He would now beg the House to understand what was the experience of draining land in the West Highlands of Scotland. Sir James Caird was surprised when he informed him he could not drain land in the Highlands under from £12 to £15 an acre; but Sir James Caird was forgetting at the time that in consequence of the character of the soil they had to put their drains very thick, and largely to depend upon tiles and filling in. The tiles had to be obtained from Ayrshire, and therefore became very expensive in the West Highlands, and the result was that efficient drainage could not be done for anything like what it could be done for in the Lowlands of Scotland. That being so, how were the poor tenants, these crofters, to drain the land, because the Bill shut them out from the assistance of the State—because they said that these people should not have a shilling of money? In Committee he hoped the Government would be able either to insert a new clause, and so alter the 5th clause, so that after the tenant had been placed in possession of the increased croft he should be able to make a reasonable bargain with his landlord with respect to drainage and other matters. Without that this Bill, instead of improving the lot of these poor people, would immensely damage them. He agreed with his noble Friend that what these people asked for was more land, and there were two ways of increasing crofts where there was land available; but there were many townships in the Highlands in the midst of other townships, and in that case they could only add land by taking it from their neighbours. Another mode of increasing the size of the croft was to wait for accidental vacancy, and then to add to it the adjoining croft. When a crofter came to him and asked to have his croft increased, he said to him—"Well, which of your neighbours do you want to swallow up?" That puzzled him. When he succeeded, 40 years ago, to an estate which was managed on the old Celtic system, and was overcrowded with crofters, he gave instructions to his agent never to turn out a crofter except for bankruptcy; but when a croft became vacant never to let it again to any man outside certain close relations of the late tenant, but to add it to adjacent crofts. Taking advantage of these vacancies, he had gradually succeeded in increasing the size of the crofts, until now they were most of them of a comparatively good size, and the crofters were now in comfortable circumstances. Now, what would be the effect of the Bill in that case? The whole of the operations to which he had been trusting for 40 years for the improvement of these people would be absolutely stopped, because the Bill gave the smallest of these people power to leave their crofts not only to their sons, and he did not object to that, or to the croft being left to daughters who had married well, or to brothers; but they empowered a crofter to leave the croft to his most distant relation; and if he should leave no will, then the croft was to fall to the heir-at-law, who might be a man who had lived all his life in Glasgow, and came for the first time into the parish to take up the croft, thus preventing that increase of the size of crofts that added so much to the comfort of the people. That was a fault in the Bill which, however, he was afraid that no Amendment the Government were likely to accept would alter, though he had an Amendment which he should put down on the Paper, with the view of leaving to the township as well as to the landlord the right to object to a tenant taking possession of the croft on the ground that he was a stranger. In all cases where adjacent land was not available the Bill would damnify the position of the crofter. The acceptance of that Bill, with all the Amendments it was possible for them to put in it, depended entirely upon what he called the difficulties in the way. What was their position? what were the circumstances that compelled them to adopt some measure which he quite admitted was necessary? In the first place, they had the manufacturers to deal with, and in their part of Scotland they had the survival of a class, once universal over the whole country, of small crofters, who were disappearing. Concurrently with that they had a strong popular opinion in favour of small holdings. He believed that in many parts of the country consolidation had gone on to an inconvenient extent, limiting the class of farms to persons with large capital. He believed it would be better to have larger farms; but just now they had almost a mania for the adoption of a plan under which small farms could be established or thrive. Then there was a third point, which he would venture to call the Celtic mania. He himself was of Celtic origin—and as pure a Celt as existed—but the views upon that matter had gone to a most extraordinary extent. Now, if a man threatened another for telling the truth, if he seized upon another man's property without a shadow of reason and defied the law, if he refused to pay his portion of the rates, he was praised all over the papers as a hero, the only condition being that he should speak Gaelic. The Celtic mania had now to be dealt with, and, as far as it could be, reduced to reason. Fourthly, they had the contagion of the Irish Land Act. He had always said that Act had debauched the public mind in these matters, as he foresaw it would do; and a great deal of the agitation brought on in the Highlands had simply been the echo of the Irish Land Act. Next, they had an organized agitation to which his noble Friend the Chairman of the Commission testified in a most frank manner when he said that the Commission was preceded by an organized band of agitators, and the Petitions that were sent in were drawn up at Westminster, and forwarded through Edinburgh by persons, many of whom were decayed schoolmasters. The crofters were told what they were to say, and in many of the Petitions the same terms were used. Then there was the fact that Government had appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the matter; and in the presence of his noble Friend the Chairman of that Commission he would say that the whole of that matter had been grossly mismanaged, and the Commission ought to have been of a different character. It ought to have been a regular Court of Inquiry, where the truth or the untruth of the statements made could have been ascertained before the Commission. Great falsehoods were given as evidence, and the landlords had not the means to disprove them. There was, however, one advantage in having as Chairman of that Commission a man like his noble Friend (Lord Napier and Ettrick).

LORD NAPIER AND ETTRICK took exception to the statement of the noble Duke, and pointed out that the Commission examined most carefully the representatives of the landlords.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL said, that his noble Friend went to the Island of Tiree in such a hurry that a letter he (the Duke of Argyll) sent to him only reached him by the purest chance before the Commission sat. If they had known what was to happen they ought to have had an organized band of examiners sent round with the Commissioners to cross-examine the witnesses, or to see that they did not tell lies, because he knew that many falsehoods were told. Excepting the fact that his noble Friend had great influence upon the witnesses that went before the Commission, and impressed them with the fact that the Government really wished to hear their side of the question, he believed the Commission was an ill-advised one, and that its Report did mischief. Then there was the political situation. They had a vote in the House of Commons, about which he wished to say something. A discussion was raised upon a Motion that something should be done in the interests of the crofters, and it was brought on by a right hon. Gentleman who intended to stand for one of the crofter constituencies. Sir William Harcourt showed an anxiety to get rid of the vote, and he made a deprecatory speech upon the matter. When the vote was put many of the hon. Members rose and marched out of the House, showing that they were disinclined to resist a vote of the kind; and the fact was that in the face of a General Election all parties were powerless in regard to it. There was a moral cowardice on the part of all parties, and although the Government deprecated the vote it was allowed to pass *sub silentio;* but still it was a recorded vote of the House of Commons, and he was not surprised that his noble Friend and other Members of the Government should dwell upon it as an important factor in the political situation. Lastly, they came to the Executive duties of the

Government, and he did not know that the House had the least idea of the real state of things that had arisen in the crofter districts. In the Isle of Skye it was a small thing to say that the Queen's writ did not run there. The Queen's Messenger had gone to the Island, and had been assaulted and maltreated to the serious danger of his life when administering the writ of the Court of Session. The poor's rates could not be collected at the present moment, and yet during the whole of the last winter the poor actually would have wanted the necessaries of life if the agents of the proprietors had not come forward to the banks and said—"We will guarantee this advance." That, he thought, was very handsome on the part of the landlords, who were not receiving their rents. At this time, also, they had the Sheriff of the county, Sheriff Ivory, representing to the Government that the state of things was intolerable; schools had been shut up, and unless the Government came to their assistance the poor would starve. He distinctly denied that any Government had the right to withhold the arm of the law from enforcing the law in such circumstances as these until the Parliament had been driven to the adoption of any particular measure. Still, they were bound to consider the state of matters, and he fully admitted the extreme importance of having this question, if possible, settled without the danger and risk of a rising and bloodshed. He entirely agreed with the statement that after all they were a very poor class of people, and that they had been misled by agitators into believing what was untrue; but the force of the law would have to be maintained sooner or later, and the sooner the better he said. Under all these circumstances, he could not deny that they were in a position that compelled them to agree to something being done; and if any measure of that kind had to be passed, the Government must draw up a Bill with the view of doing as much good and as little injustice as was possible. But he did not think they had entirely succeeded. Before sitting down he hoped the House would allow him to say a few words upon an important matter which his noble Friend had referred to. They would see the enormous temptation that a Government was under in these circumstances to invent arguments and history to support the Bill. They were driven to their wits' end to invent arguments, law, and history which had no foundation in fact, and these arguments would have a very bad effect on the country, and neutralize the Bill, because it would give a vague idea of ancient rights, which rights had never existed, and which the Bill did not sanction. He wished to point out one or two of these great historical errors to the House, which had been pressed into the service of the Bill—errors which had nothing to do with the case. One was the general impression that the old Celtic tenure of the country before the day of Charters was more favourable to the cultivating classes than they came to be under the Charters; but he contended that it could be proved beyond contradiction that under the old Celtic tenure the classes of cultivators were bound by harsh Celtic usages on the part of their Chiefs; and the first year of redemption to the Highlands and to the rest of the country was when written Charters were given. The same delusion had affected their Irish policy, where the land misery had not been due to English settlers. There was the direct mismanagement of the land by the old Celtic Chiefs; and the complaint against the English settlers was not that they had, but that they had not, introduced English law. It was exactly the same thing, only not so bad, in the Highlands. He would now allude to another historical error—that the old clans had rights of grazing. As a mode of occupation, let it be distinctly understood that the word crofter was not Celtic at all; and the custom of holding a piece of land, and a common grazing in addition, existed over the whole of Scotland and England and Europe. They could go back to a period when, in the immediate neighbourhood of Edinburgh, there were common grazings, and the place where the battle of Prestonpans was fought was a common grazing. The clans had been spoken of as if they were confined to the Highlands; but the whole South of Scotland had been occupied by clans on precisely the same footing. In Sir Walter Scott's *Border Minstrelsy* they would find the most interesting account of the state of society before the Union of the Crowns, where Sir Walter Scott talked of the Scotts, and the Elliots, and the Armstrongs, and the Johnstons as clans. They were all clans, just as the Campbells and the Frasers were clans. The mode of life was exactly the same. There was a third historical error of a most extraordinary kind. Mr. Trevelyan actually said that there was nothing in the Bill which had not hitherto existed. But they never had anything like fixity of tenure; and, what was more, they never had the grazings of the mountains. He would not trouble the House with quotations; but he had many of them from the works of the most eminent authorities on Scotch history to show that in the Middle Ages the tenure was one of tenancy at will, except in the case of those who had written leases, and written leases existed before the battle of Bannockburn. One of the most remarkable books dealing with these matters was called *The Book of Taymouth*, containing a large number of documents, which had been preserved, regarding the management of that great Highland estate, which was some 60 miles in length, and these papers contained a continuous history of the estate for 300 years. Those papers had been put into the hands of a most competent man, and the book showed that the landlord exercised the power of displacement, of removal, of plantation, of protecting deer, and of protection of heather burning, which the landlord now possessed. Refugees were very often taken in and planted on the land —refugees from broken clans—and they had the most minute directions as to their conduct and the conditions of their tenancy. In short, all the historical nonsense about private rights vanished the moment they examined those papers. As regarded tenants at will and removal of tenants, as early as the 12th century they had an Act of Parliament providing for the incoming and outgoing tenants precisely as they might have it now. When Mr. Trevelyan made such statements in the House of Commons, it only showed that he was absolutely ignorant of the ancient history of the country for which he proposed to legislate. In *The Book of Taymouth* they had the most minute directions for the protection of the red deer, from 1571 up to 1720. Then they had the Gordon Estates, extending in the year 1600 from the coast of Banffshire to the West Coast opposite, Skye; and Mr. Joseph Robertson and Mr. Cosmo Innes testified that over that vast tract of country there were no sheep; there was hardly any cattle; and the whole of the country was absolutely waste mountain. Instead of that they had now an enormous added wealth. There was another passage which he heard with astonishment, and that was the clearances and the stocking of the mountains with sheep was done for the benefit of the proprietors and not for the benefit of the public. Did Mr. Trevelyan mean to say that to change a whole country, almost waste except for a few glens, into a country where there were millions of sheep and tens of thousands of cattle was not a benefit to the country? He might just as well have said that there was no benefit to the country in the draining of the Bedford level, or the reclamation of England from wastes and forests. People talked about the diminution of population in the Highlands; but it all depended from what date they started. After the close of the Civil War in 1745 there was an enormous increase of population in the Highlands, quite out of proportion to the increase of the means of subsistence. That arose from four causes. First of all, there was peace, and one of the most prominent agitators in Scotland was so beset with sympathy for the crofters that he actually talked of the horrible outrages and massacres that went on before 1745 as a little wholesome blood-letting for the benefit of the population. When that little wholesome blood-letting came to an end there was an enormous increase in the breeding powers of the country. Then there was the introduction of the potato, and the introduction of inoculation. He mentioned the last fact lately in a speech in Scotland, and he had an inquiry from one of the most prominent physicians whether inoculation had been introduced into the Highlands. He was very glad to refer that gentleman to seven or eight extracts from the accounts of Ministers in the Statistical Account of Scotland, published in 1790, which proved his assertion. The truth was that in former times the Highlands were subjected to desolation, famines, plagues, and visitations of small-pox, which swept away thousands upon thousands, and very frequently there was a failure of the crops, followed by starvation or slow fever. The potato saved the Highlands from famine, and inoculation saved the people from small-pox. Then there was the manufacture of kelp, which led to the sub-division of the crofts, because there was plenty of occupation, and the population accordingly increased. That industry failed, and the Highlands were the only country he knew of where, when a great industry ceased, the people would not remove, but remained on the spot. The state of the Highlands was most extraordinary as to population. In the Island of Lewis in 1801 the population was 9,168, while in 1881 it was 25,487—a higher rate of increase than had taken place in the most populous city of Scotland. Those people, so far as he knew, were fishermen, and there was no additional means of support and subsistence. Those were the historical errors which had been stated by public men in favour of the Bill; and although the Bill passed into law to-morrow, it would be as useless as the action of the police in the Island of Skye, because they had to deal with moral force, and people ought to have the courage nowadays to speak a little truth and state their own opinions, There was another great fallacy with regard to the Highlands. There were a great number of people who thought that the Highlands had become the monopoly of large sheep farms, and there were no intervening farms between the size of a large sheep farm and a croft. There was nothing more absurd. He would venture to say that there was a better and more equal division of land in the Western Highlands than in any part of Scotland—certainly far better than in those parts of Scotland which showed the other day the most splendid agriculture in the Kingdom. In Argyllshire and Inverness-shire there were a large number of farms below £50, a large number between £50 and £200, and a very large number between £200 and £1,000, and the number of larger ones was very small. The responsibility for this measure rested with the Government and not with him; and he hoped they were very much encouraged by the success of the last Irish Land Act. It was perfectly clear that what were called judicial rents were not accepted by either party as judicial in the proper sense of the word, and caused both landlords and tenants to be discontented. The truth was that these matters could not be regulated and managed by Act of Parliament. They could not make a population contented by passing measures which attempted to do what in the nature of things was impossible. He thought that in the interest of justice and common sense he would have to move some Amendments in Committee. They were Amendments which he believed were not inconsistent with the principles of the Bill or the objects the Government had in view; and he was perfectly content, if they were accepted, that this Bill should be tried as an experiment to see if it would work satisfactorily.

THE EARL OF FIFE: This question of the Scottish crofters has unfortunately, like so many others connected with the land, been greatly complicated, as the noble Duke has very truly said, by appeals to class prejudice and popular ignorance on the part of those whose zeal for the Highland crofter is of but a very recent growth. I greatly fear that the condition of the Highland crofter is but the natural result of physical and economic causes which legislation is powerless to cure, and this is confirmed by the noble Lord (Lord Napier and Ettrick) who spoke second in this debate. The Royal Commissioners, whose Report I have carefully read, do not by any means suggest that the crofters suffer, on the whole, from rack-renting; but that their grievances result mainly from other causes. In an amiable desire to remedy matters, our legislators have endeavoured to rivet for all time to a barren soil populations which that soil is now unable to bear, and thus realize a graphic description of this Bill which I heard the other day, as one whose final end would be to stereotype barbarism. For what are the fundamental principles of this Bill? They are simply those of "fixity of tenure" and "fair rent," which we have heard so much of in an ominous quarter, and the application of which has not been attended with signal success. In that case—I mean in Ireland—those whom it was sought to conciliate were far from being conciliated; and in this case the self-constituted champions of the Highland crofter repudiate and refuse your concessions. Therefore, you are in this position—that, while you have set up in the British Isles principles opposed to your previous declarations and repugnant to all sound economic doctrines, you have not even secured the poor satisfaction of allaying the opposition of your agrarian agitators. But your Lordships are well aware that it is the custom nowadays to ask your critics to evolve an alternate policy; and my noble Friend will, doubtless, ask me what I propose to do to remedy the evils of which the crofters complain. Well, no insuperable difficulty seems to arise when large sums of money are required to solve difficulties on the other side of St. George's Channel. And here you have an exceptional case, in a small area, under circumstances which you say yourselves are entirely peculiar—of a small population, numbering, I believe, something like 40,000 families—and you hesitate to apply grants or loans from public money, which could not possibly be excessive, and which, if advanced to responsible persons, and with the co-operation of the landlords, might effect a material improvement in the condition of these people. Highland proprietors cannot be considered, as a whole, a wealthy class; and they are unable, therefore, to do what the special circumstances of the crofters make it desirable that they should do, either in the way of improving their holdings, or adding to their stock and implements. If, therefore, you are determined, or think you can improve their condition by exceptional legislation, such legislation should take the form of providing, by exceptional means, the necessary capital. This may not recommend itself to the sternest political economists; but it is surely better than to set up in the British Isles unsound principles, which may be claimed as precedents in the future, and which it is even now sought to extend far beyond the limits of crofting counties. If the rights of landlords are in your way when seeking to improve the condition of any specially impoverished class, by all means let those rights be removed, after due compensation given. There are abundant precedents for this. But on what principle are you acting when you wish a man to keep his land, and yet tell him, as you do in the 11th clause of this Bill, to whom he is to be compelled to let it, and at what price? Surely, if the position of the crofters is to be considered such an exceptional one as to necessitate the application of principles, the soundness of which you can hardly justify, it would have been wiser, and I am convinced much more efficacious, to have approached this question in a totally different manner—to have endeavoured to cure the root, and not the mere developments of this evil. If land is wanted to expand these crofts, let land be purchased compulsorily, in the usual manner, for that object; if loans are required for agricultural purposes, let them be provided at a low rate of interest to responsible persons; if harbours are necessary, as we know they are for the development of the fishing industries, let financial assistance be afforded under proper guarantees; and, lastly, let emigration, the only effectual remedy for congested districts, be distinctly encouraged wherever feasible, instead of being entirely ignored as it is in this Bill. I am convinced that nearly all that is requisite to deal with this special grievance in a corner of Scotland might be done through the financial aid of a State guarantee. The sum involved could not assume extravagant proportions; but if it were ten times what practical men hold to be requisite, it would yet be insignificant in comparison with those enormous sums you propose to pour out like water, to propitiate Irish discontent, and buy off Irish opposition. Surely it would have been better for the Government to have reserved some of its lavish generosity for a small Scottish grievance, rather than introduce a Bill which contains the maximum of interference with other people's freedom, and the minimum of satisfaction to the grievances alleged. Although I have some knowledge of the populations in question, I am not personally affected by the provisions of this Bill; and as those who are directly interested in it, and who have more experience than myself in your Lordships' House, have not thought it necessary to take any steps in the matter, I shall merely content myself with entering my protest against this further violation of sound principles on the part of Her Majesty's Government.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Thursday* next.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY (JUSTICES) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to remove doubts respecting the sitting and acting of the Chancellor and other officers of the University of Oxford as Justices of the Peace — Was *presented* by The Lord Chancellor; read 1ª. (No. 119.)

House adjourned at a quarter before Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 20*th May,* 1886.

MINUTES.] — Private Bill (*by Order*) — *Considered as amended* — Dundalk Gas, *put off.*

Public Bills—*Leave* – Parliamentary Elections (Ireland) (Clerical Interference), *negatived.*

Ordered—Public Parks and Works (Metropolis).*

Ordered — *First Reading* — Police Forces (Removal of Disabilities) [221].

Second Reading—Arms (Ireland) [205]; Losses by Riot (Compensation) [209]; Freshwater Fisheries [218]; Stannaries Act (1869) Amendment [203]; Mining Leases (Cornwall and Devon) [204], *debate adjourned.*

Provisional Order Bill — *Second Reading* — Police and Improvement (Scotland) (Leith) [197].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

DUNDALK GAS BILL (*by Order*).

CONSIDERATION.

Order for Consideration, as amended, read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now taken into Consideration."—(*Mr. Dillwyn.*)

Mr. J. NOLAN (Louth, N.): I rise, Sir, to move that this Bill be read a third time on this day six months. I believe that it is an unusual course to take this step, and the third reading of a Bill is, as an ordinary rule, looked upon as a mere matter of formality. I trust, however, that the House on this occasion will agree with me that it is right that it should exercise its prerogative, and throw this Bill out. It is a matter of regret to me that the Motion has not been undertaken by one possessed of more ability and greater experience in affairs of this kind; because I believe that, if the facts of the case were laid before the House as I see them, the House would have no hesitation in following the course which I propose. For the information of hon. Members, I may say that this Bill is promoted by the Dundalk Gas Company, and opposed by the Town Commissioners of Dundalk. The object of the promoters is, by Parliamentary powers, to secure and maintain certain rights and privileges which they now exercise on sufferance; whereas the object of the Town Commissioners is to stay proceedings in order that they may promote a measure in regard to the lighting of the town of Dundalk in the interests of the great body of ratepayers. It will be necessary, in order that hon. Members may understand the case thoroughly, to state that the Dundalk Gas Company, as it is at present constituted, was only formed last year; but if I may use a phrase which has already been used in this House, it is the apostolic successor of the Dundalk Gas Light Company. It appears to have dawned on the intelligence of the Directors that gas might be used for other purposes than lighting; and, therefore, they have dropped the term "gas." The Dundalk Gas Light Company was formed in the year 1836; and it was subsequently registered with a capital of £5,500. In 1863 the capital was, by a stroke of the pen, increased to £11,000—the profits in the meantime having been 10 per cent. It will be necessary to bear this point in mind in order to understand in full my reason for maintaining that the present capital of the Company has been fixed too high. Last year, upon legal advice, the Company was formed into a Limited Liability Company, with a further increase of capital, making it £16,500. Hon. Members above the Gangway have been threatening us that if the fell designs of the Prime Minister succeed capital will leave Ireland; but I think that my hon. Friend the Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) and the rest of us may take heart, because, even if British capital does leave the country, we may feel pretty sure that as long as we have gentlemen possessed of the financial ability of the Directors of the Dundalk Gas Company, who can increase with a stroke of the pen their capital of £5,500 to £11,000, and then to £16,500, we shall continue in a very prosperous condition. Now, the people of Dundalk are a long-suffering people. They endured the treatment they received in this matter of lighting their town with gas for a good number of years. At last their patience gave way, and an application was made by the Town Commissioners for a change in the method of the operations of the Gas Company. That application was refused, and the result was that the Town Commissioners decided to light the town with oil. I find that the counsel for the promoters of the Bill made merry at the notion of the Dundalk Commissioners incurring the cost of setting up lamp-posts in the town in order to light it with oil; but I would recommend to the attention of those gentlemen, and to others who may be inclined to think that human endurance has no limits, that it may sometimes be better to incur an initial expenditure in order that economy may be eventually effected. The steps taken by the Town Commissioners seem to have aroused the fears of the Dundalk gas monopolists; and they, therefore, sought advice in their difficulty. They had a very good thing in hand, and naturally enough they did not like to run the risk of losing it. They sought advice—I suppose they found that it could not be obtained in Ireland; and, therefore, they came to London, where, I believe, they found a gentleman who undertook to put them in the right way of protecting their interests. I certainly must say, after reading the Report supplied by this gentleman, that the Dundalk Gas Company were well directed, and made a wise choice in selecting him. I have read his Report through, and I find that, having referred to the manner in which the capital had been increased from £5,500 to £16,500, he says in paragraph 4—

> "I need scarcely remark that if the Company had been under Parliamentary sanction this practice would have been irregular and illegal."

After having in that way alarmed his clients, this gentleman goes on to reassure them by saying—

> "Constituted as the Company now is, it is not responsible to any authority, and, however inadvisable its proceedings, it has done no legal wrong, nor has it incurred any penalty of any kind."

I find that he omits the word "legal" before penalty; but I think there is one penalty which the Directors of this Company ought to have regard for, and that is the disapprobation of all honest men. In paragraph 5 he goes on to say—

> "The time has now arrived when the interest of the proprietors demands that the Company's operations should be carried on under Parliamentary sanction and control."

He proceeds to advise—first, that the assets of the Company should be valued; secondly, that a new Company should be formed; and, thirdly, that powers should be sought from Parliament by a Bill, and not by a Provisional Order. I ask hon. Members to observe his reasons for saying that powers should be sought by Bill—

> "A Provisional Order involves local inquiry. There are other reasons in favour of proceeding by Bill which it would not be prudent to state in a document which may fall into the hands of possible opponents."

Now, I notice that when he was cross-examined as to what he meant by "other reasons," this very clever gentleman found it convenient to forget them. I come now to the examination of the experts, and I find that as the value of this concern was fixed at the sum of £16,500, they told the Committee there was cash in hand amounting to £2,863 11*s.* 3*d.*, and that the plant, &c. was valued at £13,660, making a total of £16,523 11*s.* 3*d.*; or £23 11*s.* 3*d.* more than the sum they asked to have recognized as invested capital. They now ask for an additional sum of £5,500, which raises the capital to £22,000, with a borrowing power sought under the Bill of £8,000; consequently the Bill asks in this way to fix the capital at £30,000. Now, the earnings of one year, according to the evidence given before the Committee, were £1,170, making a dividend of 5 per cent on the £5,500 of the shares held by the new shareholders; and it is a very easy calculation to discover that the old shareholders on this arrangement will receive 15 per cent upon their original share capital of £5,500. It is quite clear, I think, to all who have followed me in this statement that the present position claimed by the Company with regard to invested capital is entirely due to the overcharges which have been made upon the residents of Dundalk in the past. It is a favourite argument in this House—and we have had a good deal of it latterly—that no matter what wrongs may have been inflicted in the past, we have only to deal with those which apply to the present, and that property, however it may have been acquired, belongs to the present owners. Sir, I should like to crave the attention of the House to the method of valuation, according to the evidence given by the advisers of the Gas Company, which has been adopted in this case. Now, the cost of the plant has always been supposed to have been paid out of the working expenses, and the valuation of the cost of plant is based upon that supposition. Perhaps the House will allow me to direct its attention for one moment to one item alone—that of the main pipes. The main pipes in the streets, according to the valuation of the expert, are valued at something like their original cost, on the supposition that they are in good condition. Let me compare that with the statement made by the Secretary of the Gas Company before the Committee on page 4 of the Report. He says that the annual quantity of gas provided is 24,000,000 cubic feet, and that the escape through the main is from 22 to 26 per cent. I am not quite sure that he did not say that it reached even 30 per cent. But, taking the escape of gas from the main at 25 per cent, we get an annual escape of 6,000,000 cubic feet, and this, be it remembered, in a town of 14,000 inhabitants. Now, the Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, speaking a few days ago, called attention to the fact that while the number of deaths per 1,000 all through Ireland was less than in England, the number of deaths per 1,000 in the towns of England was much less than in Ireland. I would like to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to this fact—that here we have a town with 14,000 inhabitants, and that 6,000,000 cubic feet of gas, according to the evidence of the agent of the Gas Company, are allowed to escape from the gas mains in the course of one year. I should certainly like to hear some authority upon sanitation express an opinion in this House as to the possible effect of this escape of gas upon the health of the people. In considering the subject it is necessary to bear in mind that when gas escapes from a main in the streets it does not at once make its way up through the concrete or macadam. I read a short time ago an account of a serious explosion which took place in the heart of London. It arose in this way—a lorry passing along a street pressed heavily upon the surface, and crushed the gas main underneath. The gas, instead of finding its way at once into the air in the street, escaped into a cellar close by, and the result was a terrible explosion. I am not able to say, at this moment, whether there were any lives lost or not. Bearing this fact in mind, and taking a common-sense view of the case, we know that in a place like Dundalk the escaped gas from the main would not make its way at once through the hard surface of a street, but would pass laterally through the soil, follow the run of some drain, and find its way into a number of houses, to the very great injury of the health of the inhabitants. Now, I think that when these facts are taken into consideration hon. Members will agree with me that such an escape of gas as is allowed to go on from year to year amounts not merely to carelessness of management, but to a criminal disregard for the health of the inhabitants. This is no Party question. Perhaps hon. Members may feel disposed to think that it is so from the fact that the Bill is backed by the noble Lord the Member for the Western Division of the County of Down (Lord Arthur Hill) and the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Major Saunderson), and that it is opposed by one who has the honour to be a Nationalist—namely, myself. But if I may be allowed to say so, I have no personal or Party concern whatever in this question. I do not know a single shareholder or Director of the Gas Campany; and, so far as the Town Commissioners of Dundalk are concerned, all I know about them is—and I should like to recommend the point to the attention of some hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway—that they are a mixed body of Catholics and Protestants, returned by a constituency which is almost entirely Catholic. The Catholic voters of Dundalk, recognizing the fact that it is well to have gentlemen of property upon their Town Commission, have always allowed a certain number of them to take seats on the Commission without regard to creed; and I may add that the gentleman who now occupies the position of Chairman of the Town Commissioners is Mr. Maxwell, a Protestant, elected by Catholic votes. I should be very glad if any hon. Gentleman could give me an instance of the same kind of thing having occurred among the Loyal minority. In conclusion, Sir, I appeal to hon. Members to vote against this Bill on the broad principle of justice, and also taking into consideration the tendency of legislation at this time, which is that the duty of lighting a town should rest with an elected body. I believe that that system has been found to work with admirable result in Manchester, Birmingham, and other towns in England; and we have certainly reason to believe that an elected body would pay more regard to the health of the inhabitants than has been paid in the past by this particular Gas Company. There is this additional point—that if any profits arise from the manufacture of gas it is well that they should find their way into the pockets of the ratepayers, instead of those of a few shareholders of a private undertaking. One objection may be urged against my proposition to throw out this Bill, and refuse to give Parliamentary powers to this Gas Company, and that is that there may be suburbs in Dundalk outside the municipal boundary in which the inhabitants might possibly be forced to pay more by the Local Authorities for the gas supplied to them than they would by a private Company; but I beg to assure the House that with regard to these points it will be found, on referring to the evidence given before the Committee, that there are no suburbs in Dundalk which are now lighted by gas, or which are likely to be lighted in future. I thank the House for the patient attention it has given to me, and I ask it to agree with me in the Amendment which I beg now to move—that the Bill be read a third time on this day six months.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would point out to the hon. Gentleman that the Motion now before the House is not the third reading of the Bill, but the consideration of the Bill as amended. The proper Motion for the hon. Gentleman to make is to leave out the word "now," and to move "that the Bill be considered this day six months."

Mr. J. NOLAN: In obedience with your ruling, Sir, I make that Motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does any hon. Gentleman second it?

Sir JOSEPH M'KENNA (Monaghan, S.): I beg to second the Motion. I hope that the House, before giving its assent to the third reading of the Bill, or to go to any further stage, will allow sufficient time to elapse in order that hon. Members may become acquainted with the whole merits of the case. Except the statements which have been made in the Press and in letters and printed papers, and what I have now heard from the hon. Member for Louth (Mr. J. Nolan) since I came down to the House, I knew nothing whatever about the merits of this case. It certainly does appear to me to be an attempt on the part of the proprietors of this Gas Company, and other persons who may be interested in the Bill, to obtain the sanction of the House to an undertaking which is altogether adverse to the interests of the population who will be affected by it. I am quite certain that if the promoters had brought such a Bill before Parliament in the past it would never have received the sanction of this House; and we have been told that not only is this concern without the ordinary sanction of a Parliamentary enactment, but that it is altogether an irregular undertaking. I think that, under such circumstances, the House will be disposed to refuse its sanction to the further prosecution of the Bill. No injury will be done to the promoters of the Bill. They will be left, as far as their property is concerned, with all the rights they have now. They will simply be deprived of the sanction of Parliament to any irregularities they may have committed in the past. All that the law of the land sanctions will be continued to them as enjoyed at the present time; but I think there is great objection to our being called upon in the present day to sanction by Act of Parliament irregularities which have taken place in the past, and which have not received the sanction of Parliament.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Nolan.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Sir EDWARD BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.): As Chairman of the Committee upon this Bill I may say that the measure was carefully considered upstairs, and that the Committee had not the shadow of a doubt in giving their acquiescence to it. We had every reason to believe that if the powers now asked for are conferred upon the Gas Company it will be of great advantage to the consumers of gas in the town of Dundalk, and that the Company will not only be enabled to supply better gas, but to supply it under better conditions. The Gas Company has been in existence now for nearly 60 years; and, so far as the opposition was concerned, it must be understood that the only persons who opposed it were the Town Commissioners of Dundalk, and that the general public did not appear in opposition at all.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): The last argument of the hon. Baronet who has just sat down seems to me to be of a somewhat remarkable character. He says that the only persons who opposed the Bill were the Town Commissioners, who were, in reality, the Corporation of Dundalk. I should like to know who else could oppose the Bill? The general inhabitants would have no power and no *locus standi* whatever to come before the Committee, seeing that the only persons who had a right to speak on behalf of the inhabitants of Dundalk were the Town Commissioners or the Town Council, who are the very persons who have protested against the Bill. Allow me to call the attention of the House to the fact that the hon. Member who has moved the rejection of the Bill represents the Northern part of the county of Louth, and that the electors of Dundalk form part of his constituents. Therefore, as far as the public opinion of the district is concerned, it is quite evident that they are practically unanimous against the Bill. I am strongly disposed to protest against conferring upon any public or private Company power to tax the ratepayers of the district for purposes of this kind; but in this instance it is proposed that the Company should, in point of fact, create a certain amount of fictitious capital, with the object of taxing the inhabitants of Dundalk for all time to come to a larger extent than they are fairly entitled to, not for the benefit of the town of Dundalk, but for the interests of this private Company, who desire to put the money into their own pockets. I must say that one of the clauses of this Bill is of a character which it is impossible to defend—namely, that which relates to the price which the Company propose to charge the ratepayers for the gas which they supply. They propose to charge 4*s.* 6*d.* per 1,000 cubic feet. Clause 54 fixes 4*s.* 6*d.* as the standard price, provided that the Company may increase or reduce the price above or below the standard price subject to the reduction or increase in the dividend payable by the Company on their ordinary share capital. Now, the price charged in the town of Belfast is only 3*s.* 6*d.* per 1,000 cubic feet; and why should there be this difference of 1*s.* per 1,000 cubic feet? The experience of the past has proved that it is of great advantage to the ratepayers of any locality that the supply of gas should be in the hands of the Corporation, and not of a private Company; and some years ago, owing to the gas supply of Belfast being in the hands of the Corporation instead of a private Company, the price of gas was reduced by 10 per cent, in addition to which the quality of the gas was rendered much superior. I think it is the duty of this House to refuse to extend the powers of this Company for the purpose of taxing the people of Dundalk against the will and desire of the inhabitants.

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.): I think it would be a most inconvenient course for the House to rediscuss every Private Bill which may come down to them from a Select Committee upstairs. I take it that in all these cases the subject has been thoroughly threshed out in Committee, and I believe that in this instance the Report of the Committee was unanimous in favour of the Bill. It is quite true that the opponents of the Bill were the persons who would naturally represent the town of Dundalk; but they seem to have entirely failed to prove their case before the Committee. A curious argument has been made use of by the hon. Member for Louth (Mr. Nolan) who moved the rejection of the Bill—namely, that the health of the inhabitants of the town has not been sufficiently considered by the Dundalk Gas Company. Perhaps it may surprise hon. Gentlemen to hear what the facts of the case are. The Town Commissioners of Dundalk have of late prohibited the Gas Company from breaking up the streets for the purpose of repairing their mains, and therefore any poisoning that may take place lies at the door of the Town Commissioners, and not of the Gas Company. I may add also that not very long ago a very serious charge of gas poisoning was brought against the Corporation of Belfast, and steps were taken to compel the Corporation to abate the nuisance. This fact would tend to show that the

Town Commissioners and other Corporate Bodies are not more careful of the public health than a Gas Company. As to the question of the price of gas, it is perfectly clear that no Company or Corporate Body could supply gas to a town of 14,000 people at the same price as they would be able to charge in a large city like Belfast. I do not, therefore, think that there is any force in the objection raised by the hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar). I believe that this opposition has been got up at the instigation of persons who are interested in the matter pecuniarily and otherwise, and I sincerely hope the House will allow it to pass its present stage.

MR. O'MARA (Queen's Co., Ossory): I rise to support the Motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Louth (Mr. Nolan), and in doing so I do not propose to follow the arguments of the hon. and gallant Member who has just sat down. The only argument in point of fact which the hon. and gallant Member used against this Motion is that actions have been brought against the Corporation of Belfast for gas poisoning, arising from a certain percentage of waste and escape of gas in the streets of Belfast. My hon. Friend the Member for Louth (Mr. Nolan) has, however, brought before the House very serious facts indeed in reference to Dundalk. He states that the amount of waste which this Company permit from their gas pipes in the town of Dundalk amounts to no less than 25 per cent, which is a very serious matter indeed, and entirely justifies the hon. Member in calling the attention of the House to it. More than that, this 25 per cent, of waste which the hon. Member has pointed out, calculating the price of gas at the rate which the Dundalk Gas Company propose to charge, amounts to an absolute loss of £1,200 a year. £1,200 are thrown away in the streets of Dundalk every year in consequence of the escape of gas from the Company's mains. That is a strong argument, to my mind, why this gas concern should not be allowed to remain in the hands of the present Company. I should not, however, support the Motion for the rejection of this Bill if I did not understand that the Town Commissioners, who are the only proper authority for the lighting of the town, are perfectly prepared to undertake the duty.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): I have only one word to say. I would like to ask English and Scotch Members, whether they do not consider that it is desirable, in a matter of this kind, which affects purely local interests, that it should be determined as far as possible by the wishes of the people themselves, expressed through their elected representatives? One of the greatest grievances of which the Irish people complain arises out of matters of this kind, and is brought about in this way. Persons go behind the representatives of the people in the locality and come here with statements which result in legislation being imposed upon them which is distinctly contrary to their wishes. Now, this is not a matter which concerns either Englishmen or Scotchmen at all; and I cannot conceive how any English or Scotch Member can honestly vote in favour of this Bill, when he knows that the persons who are actually to be affected by the measure are unanimously opposed to it, and have expressed their opposition to it, before the Committee to whom the Bill was referred. What will be the result if the House sanctions this Bill? The result will be that the people of Dundalk and those who are entitled to represent them will be justly indignant at the course taken by the House. They do not want this measure, and they object to have it forced upon them. I would, therefore, ask hon. Members to consider in this matter the wishes of the people of the locality, who have already asked through their representatives, the Town Commissioners, that the scheme of the Gas Company should be rejected.

MR. A. E. PEASE (York): As one of the Committee which sat upon this Bill, and which came to a unanimous decision on its merits, I must protest against the inconvenient and rather unusual course which is now being taken by hon. Members below the Gangway on the opposite side of the House. I am afraid that they are endeavouring to introduce a Party spirit into the discussion of a very simple question. For two days the Committee had this Bill before them; a considerable amount of evidence was produced, and the whole question was thoroughly discussed. The Town Commissioners were represented by counsel, who stated the case of the Town Commissioners with, perhaps, even more ability than has been displayed by hon. Members below the Gangway. I would respectfully ask the House to support the Committee in regard to the Report which is now before us.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin): I will not detain the House for more than a few minutes. This Bill is one of the most ordinary character. The Gas Company who are promoting it has existed for 50 years, but hitherto it has not been incorporated according to the provisions laid down by Parliament. It now comes before the House, seeking to be incorporated and to acquire rights which are subject to certain obligations. The Bill has already gone before a Committee of this House; the opponents of the Bill—the Town Commissioners—were heard before the Committee; both the opponents and the promoters were represented by counsel, and every statement of fact and argument which has been adduced in this House has already been before the Committee. The Committee, however, were unanimous in their decision in favour of the Bill. Under the circumstances, therefore, and considering that both sides have already been fully heard, I can see no reason why the House should re-examine a state of facts already fully inquired into upon the evidence of sworn witnessess; and, after hearing the arguments of counsel, I think the House has no alternative but to support the decision of the Committee. The only suggestion which has been made against the Gas Company is that they seek to extend their capital; but everybody knows how the capital of a Gas Company is fixed when it is incorporated. Its value is ascertained by taking a valuation of its plant, property, and assets. That has been done in this case. The valuer appeared before the Committee, and was subjected to a most severe cross-examination by the counsel of the opponents. The capital was established to the satisfaction of the Committee, and as to the price which the Company propose to charge for the gas witnesses were also examined, and in the end the Committee came to the conclusion that the price fixed in the Bill was reasonable. Upon these grounds, I would ask the House not to reject the Bill.

MR. SEXTON (Sligo, S.): I agree with the hon. and gallant Member above the Gangway (Colonel Waring), as to the inconvenience of reopening in this House the decisions of a Committee upstairs; but I cannot agree with what appears to be a kind of chronic determination on the part of the Chairman of Committees that the decision of the Committee shall never be questioned. Fortunately the House, in the course of the present Session, has refused to accept the judgment of the hon. Gentleman in more than one instance. It refused to do so in the case of the Manchester Ship Canal; also upon the Hayling Common Bill; and it refused to do so the other night in reference to the scheme submitted for Lowe's Charity. I trust that it will take a similar course on the present occasion, and will disregard the hon. Gentleman's recommendations altogether. The Chairman of the Committee (Sir Edward Birkbeck) has certainly confirmed me in my opposition to the Bill, because the hon. Gentleman made an extraordinary and unsophisticated remark that the Bill was opposed in Committee, not by the public, but by the Town Commissioners of Dundalk. Now, what are the Town Commissioners if they are not the representatives of the public? They appeared before the Committee in their official character, and as they opposed the Bill we are entitled to assume from that fact that the general community of Dundalk are opposed to the Bill. Not only has this remark of the Chairman of the Committee confirmed me in my conviction that the Bill ought to be rejected, but there is one other matter upon which I should like to say a word. The hon. Member for York (Mr. E. A. Pease), who only recently entered the House, and who is one of the most juvenile Members of it, has presumed to lecture Irish Members, who have been in the House for years, upon what is usual and what is inconvenient. I protest against the manner in which this Bill has been treated throughout. It was referred to a Committee upstairs upon which not one single Irish Member had a place. The decision arrived at by the Committee is one which is protested against by 85 out of the 103 Representatives of Ireland. I certainly think it would have been more proper if the Bill had been referred to a Committee entirely composed of Irish Members; and I certainly think that legislation of this kind ought to be suspended at this stage until it is decided whether or not it is to be dealt with in Dublin. The Town Commissioners of Dundalk appeared before the Committee and opposed the Bill. They pleaded that the gas supplied by the Company was very bad, that the price was too high, and that they intend to apply to the proper authorities for a Provisional Order to enable them to supply the town with gas themselves. Is it decent, when the Local Authorities of the town say that they are ready to supply it with gas—and they already supply it with water—to hand the ratepayers over to a Gas Company who propose to charge 4*s.* 6*d.* per 1,000 cubic feet for the gas supplied? We know that in many other instances the duty of lighting a locality with gas has been handed over to the public authorities, and in all these cases we know that the result has been an improvement of the quality and a cheapening of the price. I must say that it is a shameful thing to plunder the town of Dundalk by inflating the capital of the Gas Company at this moment, when we are on the verge of considering a measure which is to give local autonomy to Ireland. This Company has been in existence for 50 years, and they have never applied to Parliament for a Bill before. Then how will they be prejudiced or injured by being asked to wait till next year before a determination is arrived at upon their Bill? In the meantime, if the Town Commissioners do not ask the Local Government Board for a Provisional Order this year, the Company will be able to promote their Bill in the next Session with a much better grace. The original capital of the Company was £5,500; they are already paying upon that capital 20 per cent, and they are not only extorting that profit from gas consumers of the town of Dundalk, but they are extorting it to the extent of plunder, seeing that they have already increased their original share capital from £5,500 to £11,000. The intelligent Chairman of the Committee, who holds that the Town Commissioners did not represent the town, is simply desirous of enabling the Gas Company to multiply their original capital sevenfold. What was originally adequately met by capital of £5,500, is now, by a clause in this Bill, to be met by a capital of £37,500, for the obvious purpose that this enormous and monstrous dividend of 20 per cent may be kept up. I claim from the House, in the name of the great body of Members from Ireland, that a decision of four English Members in regard to an Irish matter should be reversed. I say that this is purely a matter of Irish legislation, and we ask that the Bill should be suspended until next year. If in the meantime the Town Commissioners do not take proper steps for obtaining a Provisional Order to supply the town with gas themselves, the Company will be able to go on with their Bill. Certainly, the Irish Members are of opinion that questions of this kind can be more cheaply and conveniently dealt with in Dublin than it is possible to deal with them here.

LORD JOHN MANNERS (Leicestershire, E.): I think the House may judge a little, from the tone and temper which have been shown in this discussion, of the manner in which even private legislation is likely to be discussed and disposed of in the new Irish Parliament.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I confess that I do not see the point of the noble Lord's remark. I am not aware that much temper has been imported into this discussion, and I certainly think that the tone which has been imported into it has had a thoroughly good cause to justify it. The question is this—Are the wishes of the people of Dundalk to be considered in regard to the manufacture of their own gas; or are four Gentlemen, who never, probably, have been able to tell to this day in what part of Ireland Dundalk is situated, to say who is to make and supply gas to the town of Dundalk? We have had a good specimen of how well qualified English Members are to decide upon Irish questions when one of them has been induced to get up in his place in this House and declare that he considers the fact of the Town Commissioners of Dundalk being the only people to oppose the Bill affords good evidence that the Bill ought to be accepted, because the general public are not opposed to it. We have been accused of importing tone and temper into the discussion; but I may inform the noble Lord that when the Irish Members conduct their business in Dublin they will not invite Englishmen to go over there and do it for them. I trust that if this Dundalk Bill ever comes before an Irish Legislature it will be Irishmen who will deal with it. They will certainly know where Dundalk is situated, and will endeavour, in dealing with a question of this character, to consult the wishes of the inhabitants. I earnestly appeal to the Government not to allow this Bill to go forward, and, at any rate, to allow the discussion to be adjourned until a fuller opportunity can be afforded for ascertaining the wishes of the people who are affected by it. It is a most remarkable thing that when we come to look at this Bill we find on it the names of two Members who have no connection whatever with the town of Dundalk. They may have some connection with and interest in the Gas Company; but, without desiring to cast any imputation on their motives, it is certainly a singular thing that hon. Members from another Province of Ireland, representing altogether different constituencies, are promoting a Bill for Dundalk. If this Bill is really approved of by the inhabitants, why did they not ask their own Representatives to take it up? It ought to be known to the Members of this House, as an additional proof of the feeling of the ratepayers of the town, that of the constituents of my hon. Friend the Member for Louth (Mr. Nolan) fully one-third are ratepayers in the town of Dundalk. If any evidence is needed as to what the feeling of the inhabitants is, surely it will be sufficient to convince every fair-minded Englishman, when it is found that the promoters of the Bill are strangers, that the Town Commissioners are unanimously opposed to it, and that an hon. Member representing the Division in which Dundalk is situated, and his constituency, composed to the extent of one-third of the ratepayers of the town of Dundalk, are united in their opposition to it. We have been taunted with adopting the inconvenient practice of re-opening the discussion of a matter which has been settled in Committee. We should have been unwilling to enter upon that course if any other had been open to us; but are we to sit here and allow a Bill which vitally affects the interests of the town of Dundalk to be thrust upon the ratepayers, when no one can get up and say that the inhabitants themselves want it? If any hon. Member can point out any other course we could have taken in the interests of these ratepayers, we shall be happy to withdraw our opposition to the present stage of the Bill. Unfortunately, these matters are not so closely watched at the time of Private Business as they ought to be; and I am afraid that this Bill has been allowed to slip through in its former stages unnoticed. This is the last opportunity we have of defending the interests of the people of Dundalk. I think it cannot be for a moment urged that, however inconvenient our course may be to the general body of the Members of this House, it is not perfectly justifiable. If hon. Members think it is inconvenient, I would urge on them that the lesson they are drawing from what has occurred this evening is that, pending a final settlement of the question of Local Government in Ireland, Bills of this kind, if introduced at all, should be dealt with by Committees composed entirely of Irish Members. I do not think that that is an improper suggestion; and a Committee so composed would have this natural advantage — that they would know all about the matter submitted to them. I am quite certain that if we had had Irish Members sitting upstairs upon these questions, in due proportion to our strength, the House itself would never have been troubled with a measure like this. Hon. Members have come privately to me, one after another, and told me how anxious they are to see the present system got rid of. It certainly is a *reductio ad absurdum* to intrust Irish Business to English or Scotch Members; and I can assure the House that, so far as the Irish Members themselves are concerned, they have every wish to spare the House the trouble and annoyance of having to deal with questions which they are really incompetent to decide.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): It has been stated that it is inconvenient to review in this House a decision arrived at by a Select Committee upstairs. Now, I really do not know what the object of the third reading of a Bill can be if it is not to afford the House an opportunity of reviewing any decision of the Committee by which it is reported. It is quite clear that a Committee may sometimes arrive at a decision which requires the interference of this House, and if ever there was a case of that kind I think this is one, and that the House ought to reverse the decision of the Committee. Gas and water are articles of the utmost importance in our modern civilization, and I hold that the only proper authority to provide both gas and water is the Representative Body of the community which requires those articles. I believe that the past experience of every municipal town has been that there is great practical inconvenience in having other authorities than the Municipal Authorities interfering with the streets and pulling up the roads. Another thing which the House will do well to recognize is that there is nothing better known among monopolies than the spirit of jugglery in which the financial position of these private Companies is dealt with. Parliament has intended to impose a limit upon the dividends paid upon undertakings of this kind; but they have left such wide doors open that it is quite possible to drive a coach and four through all the financial provisions which the Legislature has laid down. I know from personal knowledge of more than one instance in which a Gas Company has been handed over to a Corporate Body, and it has been found that a discreditable system has been pursued in manipulating the Company's accounts. I hope the House will listen to the appeal which has been made to them by the Irish Members generally, and that they will reject the Bill. The only consequence of that course will be to suspend for the present the powers asked for by the Dundalk Gas Company, and leave the question an open one. Certainly in such important matters as the supply of a town, either with gas or water, whatever decision may have been arrived at by a Committee upstairs, I hold that the matter should be suspended by Parliament until the representatives of the locality have had a full opportunity of stating their case.

MR. J. WATSON (Shrewsbury): As a Member of the Committee to which this Bill was referred, I wish to make one reference to the speech of the hon. Member for Mayo (Mr. Dillon). The hon. Member presumed to say that the Committee of four English Members to whom the Bill was referred did not even know where Dundalk was situated. He also said that we were going to give 20 per cent to the existing shareholders in this Gas Company. Neither of those assertions is correct. This Gas Company was established in 1836, and have divided for very many years only 10 per cent. There were also accumulated profits, but those profits they did not choose to divide. After taking stock last year they found that their undertaking was worth £16,500, and I know of no reason, as a business man, why the property which they possessed, but which they have not chosen to divide, should not belong to the shareholders just as much as if they had put the profits year by year into their pockets. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that the Committee were not biased in any way by any Party spirit, and that they were not influenced either by a Nationalist or a so-called Loyalist feeling. We devoted two days to the consideration of the Bill; we gave most careful attention to the evidence, and we endeavoured, as far as we could, to do justice to all parties concerned. It seems to me that, although this Company was established in 1836 for the purpose of supplying Dundalk with gas, it has never occurred to the authorities of Dundalk that they should apply to Parliament for Parliamentary powers to provide gas for themselves. When this Bill was brought in it did occur to the authorities of Dundalk that they should oppose it. I have not a word to say against the course they took; it was clearly within their right to oppose the Bill; but when I am told that the Committee who considered the Bill knew nothing of the merits of the case from a business point of view, and were so ignorant that they did not know where the town of Dundalk was situated, I beg to assure the hon. Member for Mayo (Mr. Dillon) that he is acting under a very erroneous impression. It was perfectly immaterial to us who should supply the town of Dundalk with gas; but I will say at once that when people have entered into a speculation for 50 years, they are clearly and fairly entitled to enjoy the full value of their property. There appears to have been recently some schism in the town of Dundalk, and we were told that the Company who are now supplying the town with gas have had difficulties and obstacles placed in their way by the Town Commissioners in regard to breaking up the streets. Of course, under such circumstances, without the enactment of Parliamentary powers, the town of Dundalk must be left in darkness; and we have some evidence before us that some parts of the town have been lighted with oil lamps. The passing of this Bill will put a stop to that state of things; and, seeing that the Committee devoted so much time and attention to the inquiry, I trust that the House will support the decision at which they arrived.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): This discussion seems to me to illustrate very seriously the inconvenience of this House having to deal with Irish local affairs, and to show the necessity for passing some measure which would enable the Irish people to deal with such questions as the Belfast Main Drainage and the Dundalk Gas Supply for themselves. Most hon. Members here must be altogether ignorant of the merits of these purely local schemes. I intend to vote against the further consideration of the Bill on the ground put forward by the hon. Member who has just spoken. The hon. Member says that the Company have done very well without special statutory help, and have for the last 50 years paid a dividend of 10 per cent. [Mr. Sexton: Of 20 per cent.] Besides this, they have accumulated a large reserve fund. If the Company are doing as well as that, I think the best thing for this House to do is to leave them to the mercy of the Irish Government which is about to be inaugurated.

Major SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): My name appears on the back of this Bill, and I only desire to say a word—namely, that if the Government will limit the action of Home Rule to a measure which will enable the Irish people to deal with their own sewage and gas, I shall have no objection, nor do I think that hon. Members on this side of the House will entertain against that measure the strong objections with which they now regard the Government of Ireland Bill. Hon. Members below the Gangway have tried to make it appear that this is a fight between a private Gas Company and the people of the town of Dundalk as represented by the Town Commissioners. I think the House will be surprised to learn that only one of the Town Commissioners appeared in opposition to the Bill—namely, the Chairman of that Body—and no Resolution was produced on behalf of the Town Commissioners against the measure. Therefore, considering the number of years which the Gas Company have rendered good service to the town of Dundalk, and considering also the expense to which they have been put in promoting the Bill, I trust that the House will now consent to pass the measure.

Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 169; Noes 210: Majority 41.—(Div. List, No. 100.)

Words *added.*

Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

Consideration, as amended, *put off* for six months.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

——o——

POLICE AND IMPROVEMENT (SCOTLAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (LEITH) BILL.—[Bill 197.]

(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Mundella.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. JOHN WILSON (Edinburgh, Central): I have given Notice of a Motion to oppose the second reading of this Bill on behalf of two interests. In the first place, on behalf of the inhabitants of Edinburgh, who have certain rights over the common land at Leith; and, secondly, on behalf of the Commissioners of Leith Harbour. I have been informed that the representatives of Edinburgh have now arranged their differences with the promoters of the Bill; and, as the other question with the Harbour Commissioners is one which may be easily settled in Committee, I beg to withdraw my opposition to the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member does not oppose the second reading?

Mr. JOHN WILSON: No; I beg to withdraw the opposition.

Bill read a second time, and *committed.*

QUESTIONS.

——o——

NAVY—COMMISSIONS FOR SEAMEN OF THE FLEET.

Captain VERNEY (Bucks, N., Buckingham) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether he can now hold out hopes that the higher ranks of Her Majesty's Navy will be opened to the seamen of the Fleet in cases of exceptional merit, or for acts of conspicuous gallantry or daring, by the annual promotion of a limited number of Chief and other Warrant Officers, under Article 252, page 60, of the Queen's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions, which has remained a dead letter from its issue in 1853 to the present time?

Captain PRICE (Devonport) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether the Admiralty will consider the advisability of allowing Chief Warrant Officers on retirement to take the rank of Lieutenant?

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Hibbert) (Oldham): I can only say, in reply to my hon. and gallant Friend (Captain Verney), that the question is under the consideration of the Admiralty; and at the same time, perhaps, the hon. and gallant Member for Devonport (Captain Price) will allow me to give the same answer to his Question of a somewhat similar character.

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—RENARD POINT PIER.

Mr. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Who holds the sum of £600, contributed some years ago to build a pier at Renard Point, opposite Valentia, county Kerry; and, whether, in view of the wants prevailing in that district, and the urgent need of employment among the labouring classes, steps will be taken to apply the funds in question to the purpose for which it was raised?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, the fund to which the hon. Gentleman referred had never come into the possession of either of the Government Departments concerned, and they had no knowledge whatever of the existence of such a fund.

FIRES (METROPOLIS)—FATAL FIRE IN BEAK STREET.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If his attention has been called to the evidence given by Mr. Palmer and Captain Shaw before the Coroner, at the inquiry into the sad loss of life in Beak Street on the 28th of April; whether that evidence tends to show that the long hours of continuous work, which (from the limited funds for this purpose at the disposal of the Metropolitan Board of Works) is forced upon the men of the Brigade, is unfair to the men themselves and dangerous to the safety of the public; whether the time has come when the recommendation of the Select Committee of 1876, that the Rate for the purposes of the Fire Brigade should be raised from the present limit of one halfpenny to a Rate of one penny, ought to be carried out; and, whether he is prepared to recommend to Parliament, in the interests and for the safety of the public, that this additional rating power should be granted by Statute to the Metropolitan Board of Works?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Childers) (Edinburgh, S.): In reply to my hon. Friend, I have to say that I have no control over, or knowledge of, the details of the management of the Fire Brigade; but the Metropolitan Board of Works are aware that I am favourable to the limit of ½*d.* for the Fire Brigade rate being raised as proposed in the Bill now before Parliament.

SEA FISHERIES ACT (SCOTLAND)—FORESHORES.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll) asked the Lord Advocate, If the Act of George 3, chapter 31, section 11, conferring absolute rights to the use of foreshores to fishermen in Scotland, for

> "Erecting tents, huts, and stages, and for the landing, pickling, curing, and reloading their fish, and in drying their nets, without paying any foreland or other dues,"

is still in force; and, if there is any means of securing these rights to the fishermen without obliging them to undertake costly suits in the Courts of Law?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): I have more than once had occasion to consider the question within the last few years, and while it is not free from doubt, I am personally of opinion that the provisions of the Act 11 *Geo.* III. c. 31, with regard to the use of the foreshore by persons engaged in the "white herring fishery" are still in force. The provisions of the Act 29 *Geo.* II. c. 23, in regard to the use of the foreshore are repealed by the Sea Fisheries Act, 1868, but the provisions of the Act 11 *Geo.* III. c. 31, with regard to that subject are not, in my view, repealed by the Sea Fisheries Act 1868, nor by the Act 28 & 29 *Vict.* c. 56. I fear that if the matter is brought into question there is no other mode of getting it authoritatively decided but by a Court of Law; but I think that the Statute Law relative to the use of the shore by fishermen is at present in an obscure and unsatisfactory condition, and I have it in contemplation to propose its amendment so that it may be readily intelligible to that industrious and meritorious class whose interests are affected by it.

TRADE AND COMMERCE — IMITATION BRITISH TRADE MARKS.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If Her Majesty's representatives at the recent Industrial Convention at Rome have presented their Report, and if the delegates of other Nations assented to the suggestions of the Master Cutler and the Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce of Sheffield to restrain the fraudulent placing on Foreign-made goods of British trade marks or the names of British places or firms?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) Aberdeen, S.): The British delegates to the Industrial Property Conference at Rome have not yet presented their Report; but a final Protocol was signed on the 11th instant, by all the delegates, submitting the proposals of the Conference to their respective Governments, with whom the decision as to the acceptance of these proposals now rests. Among the proposals is an additional Article to the Convention of 1883, designed to restrain the fraudulent use of false indication of origin of goods. This Article was proposed by the British delegates in accordance with instructions suggested by the Board of Trade. Papers on the subject will shortly be laid before Parliament.

THE WESTERN PACIFIC — REPRISALS OF NATIVES.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether he has received the official report of the Captain of Her Majesty's Ship *Diamond* with reference to the reprisals she inflicted, towards the close of last year, upon the natives of Normanby Island, Hoopiron Bay, Millport Bay, Norava Island, and other places in the Western Pacific; and, if so, whether he will lay all the documents relating to these transactions upon the Table of the House?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. HIBBERT) (Oldham): In reply to the Question of the hon. Member, I have to say that I have not yet received any official Report of the occurrences in question.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—CLAREMORRIS —INTIMIDATION.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether any inquiry has been held as to the alleged destruction of voting papers and intimidation by a bailiff named Godfrey during the Poor Law election in the Kilvine electoral division of the Claremorris division; if so, what was the result of the investigation; and, whether none of the witnesses who were ready to testify to the truth of the charges made were questioned by the police?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): A prosecution has been ordered in this case. There has been some delay owing, I understand, to the officer in charge of the proceedings having been recently on leave; but there is no intention of allowing the matter to drop, and every witness will be produced who is capable of throwing any light on it.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACT, 1884—REQUISITION FORMS—THE RATE COLLECTORS OF MOUNTMELLICK UNION.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to the fact that the rate collectors of Mountmellick Union had returned the requisition forms given to them by the clerk for service under the Representation of the People Act, on the ground that they could not undertake the work without remuneration; and, whether, in view of the very serious difficulty which is hereby revealed, the Local Government Board propose to take any steps to prevent wholesale disfranchisement, and to secure reasonable remuneration to the officers in question?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Yes. It is a fact that the collectors of the Mountmellick Union have declined to serve the notices until the remuneration they are to receive is fixed. The Local Government Board have communicated to the Clerk that this is a duty imposed on the collectors by statute, and calling attention to the fact that there is a means by which the Guardians, with the assent of the Local Government Board, can provide what remuneration they are to receive in respect of these services. Finding, however, that the collectors still persisted in their refusal, the Clerk of the Board was directed yesterday by the Local Government Board to inform these officers that if they do not serve the notices in question they will be immediately dismissed.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I would like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, supposing these officers still persist in their refusal, the Local Government Board will take steps to prevent the disfranchisement of a large number of persons in the constituency?

MR. JOHN MORLEY: I will make further inquiries as to how far it is possible for the Local Government Board to deal with the matter.

SOUTH AMERICA—THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

LORD FREDERICK HAMILTON (Manchester, S.W.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether his attention has been called to the Laws respecting Nationality in force in the Argentine Republic, under which children born on Argentine territory, of British parents, are claimed as Argentine citizens, and, if males, are held liable for military service, without being allowed the option of retaining British Nationality; and, whether Her Majesty's representative at Buenos Ayres is justified in issuing British passports to such enforced citizens of the Argentine Republic?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): According to the laws of the Argentine Republic, all persons born in the territories of the Republic, with the exception of children of members of the Diplomatic Corps, whatever the nationality of their parents, are considered to be subjects of the Republic whilst resident there. Children born there of British parents are, however, according to British law, also British subjects. Her Majesty's representative at Buenos Ayres would be justified in issuing British passports to such children; but, as they would also owe allegiance to the Argentine Republic, such passports would not afford them protection against the laws of that Republic so long as they resided within its territories. Nevertheless, in the event of any special case arising in which a British subject might be likely to suffer from his owing such double allegiance, Her Majesty's Government would always be ready to make a friendly appeal upon the subject to the Argentine Government. For further information on the subject, I beg leave to refer the noble Lord to page 61 of the Appendix to the Report of the Royal Commissioners of 1869 for inquiring into the Laws of Naturalization and Allegiance.

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS ACT—FISHERMEN ON THE NORTH-EAST COAST OF SCOTLAND.

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government this Session to amend the Agricultural Holdings Act, and, in particular, with a view to remedy the conditions under which fishermen and others on the north-east coast of Scotland are obliged to build houses at their own cost, and are refused any tenure of land or compensation on removal, being "tenants at will," and liable to be removed at any term during the pleasure of the proprietor of the land?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I fear I cannot hold out hope of the general provisions of the Agricultural Holdings Act being amended during the present Session. Very hard cases of the class referred to in the Question have repeatedly been brought under my notice, and appear to call for a remedy, though it may be a question whether the remedy should find a place in an amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act, or in a Local Government measure.

PIERS AND HARBOURS (IRELAND)—HOLYHEAD PIER.

LORD CLAUD HAMILTON (Liverpool, West Derby) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the attention of the Treasury has been drawn to the character of the work about to be undertaken by the Board of Trade in connection with the Mail Packet Pier at Holyhead; whether the Mail Packet authorities have protested against the work in question being carried on, as being likely to prove prejudicial to the rapid conduct of the Mail Service, and a source of danger, under certain conditions, to the Mail Steamers; and, whether, under these circumstances, the Treasury will either direct the discontinuance of the work, or authorise the necessary outlay for putting the Pier in an efficient and satisfactory condition, as requested by the Mail Packet Company?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The works on the Mail Packet Pier at Holyhead have been repeatedly brought to the notice of the Treasury. They consist of the raising of the platform of the pier so as to facilitate the transfer of the mail bags from the train to the packet, and *vice versâ*. I should explain that there are four berths for the mail steamers at the pier; three of these are alongside the wooden pier, and the raising of the platforms opposite those berths has, I understand, been completed. It is now proposed to take in hand the raising of the platform opposite the fourth berth, which is the most sheltered, being alongside the stone pier. The Packet Company ask that, as during the work this berth will be for the time not available, the work itself should be postponed till the open wooden pier has been so improved by close piling as to make it a safe berth in all winds. The technical officers of the Board of Trade, however, have reported that reasonable security is afforded by the structure as it is at present, and, having regard to that Report, the Treasury has authorized the raising of the platform to be proceeded with.

ARMS (IRELAND) BILL.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY (Glasgow, Blackfriars) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the marginal reference to the 41 and 42 Vic. c. 5, in the Bill he has introduced to continue for a limited time the Peace Preservation Act is an error, and whether he intended to refer to the continuance of the 44 and 45 Vic. c. 5; what Irish counties are now proclaimed under the provisions of this Act; what steps are to be taken to renew the Expiring Act within the next twelve days, which prohibits the importation and possession of explosive substances as well as arms; and, whether he is aware that, before the passing of the Act, immense quantities of rifles and revolvers were sold at very low price by grocers, ironmongers, and others in all parts of Ireland, and that, on the passing of the Act, applications were made by shopkeepers for compensation for the loss of their stocks and a lucrative trade?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The mistake to which the hon. Member calls attention in the first paragraph of his Question was a misprint. I have already explained, in answer to Questions of the hon. Member for Londonderry City, the extent to which the Act is now in force in Ireland, and also its bearing on the question of the importation and possession of explosive substances; and I shall make a further statement on the subject when moving the second reading of the Bill to-day. There is no reason to believe that before the passing of the Act immense quantities of arms were sold as suggested. After its passing there were about 20 cases in which dealers applied to have their stocks purchased under the authority of the 1st section, on the ground that owing to the proclamation of the surrounding districts there was no sale for the arms. In these cases the arms were purchased at reasonable prices, and are now in store.

INDIA—CALCUTTA CUSTOM HOUSE—ADULTERATION OF M'GAVIN AND CO.'S WHISKY.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether his attention has been called to an adulteration of MacGavin and Co.'s whiskey at the Calcutta Custom House; and, whether he will communicate with the Government of India on the subject?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. STAFFORD HOWARD) (Gloucester, Thornbury) said, this matter was at present under consideration, and, therefore, he would postpone an answer to the Question.

NAVY—H.M.S. "COLOSSUS"—THE 43-TON GUNS.

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD (Marylebone, E.) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether it is true that H.M.S. *Colossus* is shortly going to sea, having on board 43-ton guns of a similar pattern to the gun which lately exploded with a reduced charge on board H.M.S. *Collingwood;* and, whether, considering the demoralising effect produced on the ship's company by a doubt as to the life of their guns, he will use his endeavours to have the guns shifted and replaced by those of a known trustworthy character?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. HIBBERT) (Oldham): The *Colossus* is to be attached for the present to the Channel Squadron, and will shortly proceed on a cruise. In view of the recent accident to the 43-ton gun in the *Collingwood*, directions have been given that the *Colossus* is not for the present to use her 43-ton guns in target practice. As regards the question of shifting and replacing these guns, it is intended to strengthen them; but no action will be taken until the Report of the Committee inquiring into the subject of these guns has been considered.

MR. BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) asked, If the right hon. Gentleman would say whether there were any guns for the Navy of a known trustworthy character, considered in reference to their having undergone a continuous test such as it might be reasonably inferred they would undergo in an ordinary naval action?

MR. HIBBERT: The Question is of so important a character that I should like to have Notice of it.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.) wanted to know whether the right hon. Gentleman would state what other guns the *Colossus* carried, and what would be the condition of the *Colossus* in case she were attacked by the Greek Fleet?

MR. HIBBERT: The *Colossus* has already fired off these 43-ton guns at sea without any serious result occurring. Therefore I think that if she were attacked by any Greek or other vessel she would be able to defend herself in a proper way.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: But she is ordered not to fire.

MR. HIBBERT: She is ordered not to use the guns in target practice; but she is not ordered not to use them in case she is attacked.

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD (Marylebone E.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, considering the peculiar construction of the 43-ton guns, any steps were taken to ascertain what pressure would occur in the chase of these guns when fired with a charge of "cocoa powder," especially when fired rapidly; and, if so, what was the result; what is the highest pressure considered safe for the chase of these guns; and, whether there have been strong opinions expressed by competent authorities as to the safety of using the cocoa gunpowder with the 43-ton gun?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL OF ORDNANCE (Mr. WOODALL) (Hanley) (who replied) said: The Question of the noble and gallant Lord involves several technical points which are among those to which the attention of the Ordnance Committee, as specially constituted for inquiry into this gun, would naturally be directed. I would rather not anticipate by a present answer the conclusions to which the Committee may come.

IRELAND—ALLEGED CATTLE STEALING.

CAPTAIN M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is true that five head of cattle were stolen from the lands of one Peter Harkin, a bailiff residing at Costrea, near Ballinamore, county Leitrim, on the night of Friday 14th instant; whether this Peter Harkin is the same man as was shot at and wounded a few years ago; and, whether any arrests have been made?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Sir, five head of cattle disappeared from the lands of Peter Harkin on the night of the 14th instant, and have not yet been found. It is not known whether they strayed or were stolen. Harkin has made an information. With regard to the last paragraph but one, Harkin was fired at and wounded on the 6th of August, 1882.

INLAND FISHERIES (IRELAND)—POISONING FISH.

CAPTAIN M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the following rivers in the county Cork have lately been systematically poisoned, viz. the Lee, the Sullane, and the Bandon, and large quantities of young as well as full grown salmon thereby destroyed, as many as 80 having been destroyed in one hole on the Lee on the 11th instant; whether these poisoned fish have passed through the hands of two men in Macroom, named Daniel Lucy and Richardson, the latter being station master of the Cork and Macroom Railway, and been disposed of by them in the Cork Market for despatch to England and elsewhere; whether any arrests have been made; and, whether any steps can be taken to prevent men dealing in poisoned fish?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): From inquiries made, it would appear that the Rivers Lee and Sullane were recently twice poisoned. Forty-five fish were known to be destroyed, sold to buyers in Macroom, and sent to Cork Market. No poisoning took place on the 11th instant. The Bandon was poisoned on the 9th instant, but the poisoned fish were not sold in Cork. The law provides a penalty of £10 for any person found near a river with deleterious matter in his possession for the destruction of fish, and £5 for any person found taking poisoned fish from any river. It it is the duty of the bailiffs employed by the Conservators to enforce the law.

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)—ALLEGED RIOT AT LISTOWEL.

CAPTAIN M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is the fact that the police issued summonses against some persons said to be guilty of riotous behaviour in the town of Listowel on the 28th April and 4th May; whether, notwithstanding their having general instructions from the Town Commissioners to proceed for any breach of the Towns Improvement Act, that body called a special meeting on the evening of 7th May, and, without consulting the police, passed a Resolution directing the summonses to be withdrawn; and, whether, under the circumstances, the Attorney General will exercise the power given to him by the ninety-second section of the Towns Improvement Act, and authorise the constabulary to proceed against the parties charged with the alleged riotous behaviour?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Sir, the facts are as stated. The summonses have not been withdrawn, and will come on for hearing on the 22nd instant. It is, therefore, unnecessary for the Attorney General to consider his powers under the 92nd section of the Towns Improvement Act. His present opinion is that the section has no application to cases of this kind.

RAILWAYS (METROPOLIS)—THE PADDINGTON AND LIMEHOUSE RAILWAY.

MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether he can explain the delay which has taken place in the commencement of the Paddington and Limehouse Railway, the South Eastern Railway extension in Southwark and Bermondsey; and, whether, taking into consideration the serious loss entailed by suspense and uncertainty upon the shopkeepers and owners and occupiers of property in the scheduled area, and the great amount of unemployed labour in the Metropolis, he can take any steps to expedite the commencement of the works referred to?

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. D. ACLAND) (Cornwall, Launceston) (who replied) said: Sir, the Board of Trade have no special knowledge with regard to the Question put by the hon. Member. The Companies are bound by their Acts to complete their undertakings within a specified time, and in the event of their failing to do so the deposit which, in the case of a Company not paying interest on its ordinary share capital, is required to be made with the Court of Chancery on the application for the Bill is liable to forfeiture. In the case of an existing Company paying interest on its ordinary share capital, the Company is liable to a penalty of £50 a-day. In the event of loss or inconvenience being sustained by non-fulfilment on the part of the Companies of their duties in these respects, it will be a matter for grave consideration whether the penalties provided by the Act should not be enforced.

METROPOLITAN RATING—PARISH OF PUTNEY.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Upon what ground the statement was made in the Return presented to Parliament by the Local Government Board, dated 30th March 1886, that the highest rated parish in the Metropolis was Putney, which had to pay 6*s.* 8*d.* in the pound, including 10½*d.* in the pound for the maintenance and preservation of Wimbledon and Putney Commons; whether he is aware that there is no such rate as 10½*d.* in the pound there mentioned, or any uniform rate for the purposes alleged, over Putney or any other parish; whether the said Return is erroneous in omitting reference to the said Commons' rates as regards portions of Wandsworth and other parishes; and, whether he will cause the Return to be re-examined and amended?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. STANSFELD) (Halifax): I regret to say that I find that, through an error on the part of the printer which should have been noticed in the examination of the Return, but which was, unfortunately, overlooked, the parish of Putney is represented as paying a higher rate in the pound than was in fact the case. The maximum rate levied on any class of property in the parish for the maintenance and preservation of the commons referred to appears, from the Return made by the Conservators of the commons, to have been 5½*d.* in the pound, instead of the amount stated in the Return to which the hon. Member alludes. The rate in respect of these commons is not a uniform rate. We now understand that a rate is levied by the Conservators of the commons referred to on part of the parish of Wandsworth; but no reference to such a rate was made in the Returns supplied to the Board by the overseers of that parish or by the clerk to the Conservators. The circumstances do not appear to be such as to require that the Return should be re-issued. The Return has been made annually, and care will be taken to make the necessary correction when it is next issued.

PRISONS (IRELAND)—OMAGH GAOL.

LORD ERNEST HAMILTON (Tyrone, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is true that it is proposed to do away with the Omagh Prison and to constitute Derry Gaol a district prison; whether he is aware that Omagh Gaol is in a healthy open situation, while that of Derry is in a densely crowded part of the town; whether Omagh is more convenient as a centre than Derry; and, whether, before arriving at any final settlement of this question, he will make further inquiries as to the advisability of taking this step?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): In accordance with a recommendation of the Royal Commission on Prisons, it has been decided to reduce the prison at Omagh to the *status* of a minor prison; but there is no intention to close it altogether. It is not sufficiently commodious for the Londonderry and Omagh Prisons combined; whereas the Londonderry Prison has sufficient accommodation for that purpose, and is equally convenient. The sanitation of both prisons is stated to be quite satisfactory.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.) asked the Prime Minister, What would be the order of Business this evening? After the House had arrived at a decision on the second reading of the Arms Bill, would the debate on the Government of Ireland Bill be proceeded with?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian) said, that was undoubtedly the intention of the Government, always supposing that the debate on the Arms Act should close, as he considered probable, at a convenient hour.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH further inquired whether, if the debate on the Arms Bill should not be concluded by midnight or thereabouts, the next Order would be taken?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Yes; the next Order.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

ARMS (IRELAND) BILL.—[BILL 205.]

(*Mr. John Morley, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. Attorney General.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said: It will probably be convenient that I should preface the short statement that I shall have to make with a brief explanation of what the Act which we propose to continue provides for and effects. The Peace Preservation Act, which our Bill proposes to continne, was carried, as hon. Members are aware, in the year 1881, and what it does is to impose certain restrictions upon the carrying and having of arms, and restrictions upon the importation and the selling of arms. It imposes restrictions on the carrying and possession of arms in the districts which the Lord Lieutenant, by an Order in Council, has proclaimed. The proclamations may be of two characters. They may either extend to both carrying and having arms, or they may be limited to the carrying of arms only. No person in a proclaimed district can carry or have arms without a licence, and any person carrying or having, or reasonably suspected of carrying or having, arms without a licence may be arrested without warrant by a constable and brought up before a magistrate. The Lord Lieutenant may by warrant further direct two persons named in the warrant to search in a house specified for arms; but the search must be made in the day-time, and the warrant is only good for a period of 10 days. The warrant is to be countersigned by the Inspector General, or the Deputy Inspector General, or by any Resident Magistrate within the proclaimed district. The Act also extends to ammunition. But I should like to point out, in reply to the Question of the hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. Mitchell Henry), that the more formidable kind of explosives, such as dynamite, nitro-glycerine, and so on, have long ago been amply provided for by the general law. The general law gives perfectly sufficient powers and authority for regulating the importation, manufacture, storage, and possession of these explosives. I am referring to the Explosives Act of 1875.

Mr. LEWIS (Londonderry): Does the right hon. Gentleman say it includes importation?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: Yes; importation is one of the things provided for in that Act. So much, Sir, for the restriction on having and carrying. But there are also restrictions of much greater value and importance upon the importation and the selling of arms. The importation of arms and explosives is prohibited save at certain specified ports, and there, of course, their importation takes place under the supervision of the Custom House officers; and the consignees of arms and ammunition can be compared with the lists of persons who in proclaimed districts are entitled to deal in arms and possess them. The importation and sale are not regulated by the sections of the Act itself, but by the Order of the Lord Lieutenant, and the principal provision in that respect is that a licensed dealer is to return every month an account of his stock; also he is obliged to keep a register of the persons to whom he sells arms, and the date at which he sold them. That is obviously a provision analogous to an Act of our own for the regulating of the sale of poison. Licences to sell are granted by the Inspector General, the Deputy Inspector General, and by Resident Magistrates. I should, perhaps, explain that the reason for the 2nd sub-section of the Bill before the House is that, supposing this Bill not to pass before the 1st of June, it would not operate without this clause to revive or continue proclamations, licences, and orders which would then expire, and accordingly it saves the trouble of issuing fresh proclamations and fresh licences—trouble, I mean, not only to the Government authorities but to holders of licences. That sub-section enacts that proclamations, licences, and orders already in existence shall be of the same force as if there had been no interruption in the Act. We have already under a not commonly known Act of *Geo.* III. a provision that in the case of Bills for continuing Acts which would expire during the Session, such Acts shall be deemed to continue from their expiration; we have, however, inserted an express provision to that effect in the Bill. There is one change only which we propose to make in the Peace Preservation Act. That is in the 4th sub-section of Section 4. That sub-section was introduced on the Motion of a well-known Member of this House—Mr. Callan, late Member for Louth. It provides that any occupier of one or more agricultural holdings, provided he can get a certificate from two Justices, shall be able to claim a licence to have and carry arms, either specifically or generally, as of right, from the Resident Magistrate or other authorities. That sub-section was accepted at the time; but it was found during Lord Spencer's administration of this Act to work with considerable inconvenience; and, therefore, in Committee I shall propose to repeal that sub-section. It was a sub-section borrowed, I believe, from the Act of 1875. That is the only change we propose to make in Committee in the Peace Preservation Act. I will now say a word or two as to the operation of the Act. There are 28 counties which are either wholly or partially under proclamation; 32 proclamations—only proclamations against carrying—are in force.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): Will you give the exceptions?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: The excepted counties are Antrim, Londonderry, Louth, and Wicklow. The cities of Belfast and Londonderry are proclaimed.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Are they proclaimed for importation?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: I will answer the hon. and learned Member in a moment or two. The number of prosecutions have not been very considerable. In 1881 there were 75 prosecutions and 58 convictions. In 1882 there were 127 prosecutions and 102 convictions. In 1883 there were 86 prosecutions and 73 convictions. In 1884 there were 73 prosecutions and 56 convictions. In 1885 there were 74 prosecutions and 56 convictions; and so far in the year 1886 there have been 51 prosecutions and 44 convictions. In reply to the hon. and learned Member (Mr. Healy), Belfast is proclaimed partially, only for carrying and not for having arms.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: As to importation?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: I shall be able to tell the hon. and learned Member before the debate closes. That is all I have to say as to the working of the Act. What is there to justify a continuance of it? There is a vast difference between the general state of things in the country at the present moment, and the state of things in Ireland in the year 1881, when this Act was first brought before Parliament. In the first four months of 1881 the agrarian outrages of the more serious kind were 556. In the first four months of 1886 the number of serious agrarian offences was only 184; and if we take the comparison in another way, the figures are still more striking and still more satisfactory. In the four months before the introduction of the Peace Preservation Act of 1881, the serious agrarian crimes were 881. Therefore, we have to compare 881 with 184. So far as offences go, during the present year, I think, in a previous debate, the House was placed in possession of the number of outrages, excluding threatening letters. In August, last year, the serious offences were 59; in September, 51; in October, 60; in November, they were 48; in December, 64; in January, they fell to 46; in February, they fell to 33; in March, I am sorry to say, they rose to 56, but in April they fell again to 49. The figures, therefore, at the present moment have nothing in them of an alarming kind, or to excite great apprehension. But even if the figures had been worse, I am not sure that, viewing the serious agrarian offences alone, we should have felt bound to continue the Act, because it has been found that deliberately planned murder and outrage have not and cannot be prevented by the provisions of an Arms Act. The Arms Act, as I ventured to say the other night to the hon. Member for Glasgow, was in full force when sanguinary offences against the person and violent attacks upon houses were most frequent. If a murder is planned and arranged for and premeditated, we may be quite certain that it will not miscarry for want of a weapon to execute it. That is not my view only. It is the view of all those who have been most directly responsible for peace and order in Ireland. If, therefore, the prevention of violent and terrible crime had been the only justification for this Act, I repeat we might very well have allowed it to expire. Well, then, Sir, what is the cause for the continuance of the Act? Now, I gave that cause the other day in reply to the hon. Member for Derry (Mr. Lewis) in words which, I regret, at the time gave some offence—offence which was not for a moment in my intention, and which I cannot admit to have been at all justified by the words which I used. What I said was that, according to my information, the Arms Act was believed to be, as I have already stated, of very little use in preventing deliberate outrages and crime. But I said it was believed to be of considerable use in preventing—and these were my exact words, and I do not wish to flinch from them—to be of use in preventing men in the North of Ireland and elsewhere—and I am obliged to the hon. and gallant Member opposite (Colonel Waring) who recognized that I used these words—men in the North of Ireland and elsewhere coming to public gatherings with arms. These are the words which I used, and they are words to which I adhere. I was asked the other night, by way of interjection, why I mentioned the North at all. ["Hear, hear!"] The hon. Member (Mr. Lewis) says "Hear, hear!" The reason is perfectly obvious. It is in the North principally that, owing to the intermixture of religions, and owing to the tradition of faction fights, large bodies of men would be likely to come into conflict in times of considerable excitement and when political feeling ran high; and, as we know, they have been accustomed to come into conflict in such times in years past. That was my reason, and I think it was a very common sense reason, for mentioning the North as well as other parts of Ireland. I submit with great confidence to hon. Gentlemen opposite that there was nothing in that observation properly calculated to hurt their susceptibilities. I say again, all this is no discovery of mine—this special use and advantage of the Peace Preservation Act. When I was in Dublin during the Easter Recess I had the opportunity, of which I availed myself, of discussing the working of this Act and the desirableness of its continuance with those who, as I have said, are directly and immediately responsible for the preservation of order and peace in Ireland. All these high and responsible authorities set a very great store by the provisions regulating importation. They regard those provisions as having been, and as likely to be, of very great value. But it is felt that the true use of the Arms Act is that it prevents the growth of the practice which in days of political excitement might be likely to grow to very formidable dimensions—the practice of carrying arms at fairs, races, markets, and processions, and other gatherings. It is feared that if this Act were to drop, there would be a risk, the times being what they are, of that practice growing to very formidable dimensions. I do not believe that men would go deliberately to gatherings of this kind with the premeditated intention of carrying on violence on a great scale; but any hon. Gentleman will perceive that, being in the possession of arms, they would be tempted in a moment of excitement to give emphasis to their political views, whether green or orange, by the discharge of these firearms, sometimes loaded, and which are, perhaps, often much more dangerous to their possessors than to anyone else. Sir, we not wish to exaggerate the danger to which I have been referring; neither do I wish, on the other hand, to be stupidly optimist as to the condition of Ireland, either North or South. It has been my endeavour during the short time that I have been in Office to look at the facts of Ireland as regards the conditions of social order with a perfectly fair and impartial eye. The Irish Government keeps itself constantly and vigilantly informed—as well informed as the circumstances of the case allows—as to the state of feeling in the country both North and South, as to all that is going on in the country so far as we can ascertain it; and while we see in the state of things in the country nothing to justify anything like alarm or apprehension regarding that kind of conduct which the Arms Act is designed to prevent, we feel that there is a general state of suspense and expectancy. [*Ironical laughter.*] Why, of course, to deny that would be childish. There is a general state of suspense and expectancy, and in some parts, no doubt, the tide of political feeling does run exceedingly high. Under these circumstances, I do not argue the question whether the state of feeling in Ireland is such as would have justified us in bringing in a Peace Preservation Act if it were to be done afresh and for the first time. But what I submit to the House is, that as we find this Act in existence and in working order, we have come to the conclusion that it is only consistent with prudence and common sense to retain it for the purposes I have mentioned; and I cannot believe, Sir, that in any quarter of the House any use has been made, or is likely to be made, of the provisions of that Act which can be reasonably objected to by any friend of peace and order in Ireland. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. John Morley.*)

Mr. PARNELL (Cork): I had intended, Sir, to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary whether he would not agree to the omission of Subsection 4 of Section 4 of the expiring Act, which he described to the House; and I also intended, in addition, to ask whether he would not agree to take power for the Licensing Authority to revoke any licences that may have been issued to have or carry arms in any district?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): We have those powers already by the Lord Lieutenant's Proclamation.

MR. PARNELL: I did not understand that the Proclamation could empower the Licensing Authority to revoke the licence himself, but that it could be revoked only by the permission of the Lord Lieutenant, a very roundabout and difficult thing to bring about. A Proclamation has to be advertised in *The Dublin Gazette*, and, of course, has to depend more or less on the knowledge of the Central Authority in Dublin Castle, rather than on the knowledge of the Local Authority, who had given the licence. I would not propose, of course, to interfere with the power of the Lord Lieutenant to issue such a Proclamation; but I think the power should be extended to the Licensing Authorities themselves, and that they should have power to revoke licences when once given. Why do I ask this? We complain, apart altogether from the general principle of the right to bear arms—we complain that powers such as these have been injuriously and unfairly used in two different directions—they have been used, in the first place, to harass and annoy the Nationalists of Ireland. They have been used unnecessarily to deprive respectable farmers of their shot-guns, which were intended for the purpose of scaring birds away from growing crops, and which they would not use except for that purpose. Any practical agriculturist will bear me out in saying that nothing is better for scaring away rooks from crops than firing a shot-gun. It is much better than any kind of scarecrow, even such as the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Major Saunderson) has been endeavouring to set up during the last few days or weeks, so as to intimidate the House of Commons in reference to the passage of another Bill. But this power of the Lord Lieutenant has also been used generally to the annoyance and to the promotion of discontent among the population in different parts of Ireland. It has been used in a wholesale way. I do not speak exactly of the past or the existing Act, but of similar Acts used in a wholesale way to the annoyance of most respectable people in Ireland. The understanding we wish to come to is this—that since the Government have used the Act to disarm the Nationalist people of Ireland, so you should also use it to disarm the Orange population—at all events, that section of the population which have shown by its frenzy and the frenzy of its Leaders, and by its acts, that though it is not willing to take to the open field and fight, yet it always is willing, whenever it can do so with impunity, to assassinate, or attempt to assassinate, those who happen to differ from them in political opinion. Well, Sir, it cannot be contended for a moment that considerable need does not exist at the present moment for some precautionary steps on the subject. We have had incitements coming from high quarters, and from both sides of the House. I will not say that the three chief Leaders of the Orangemen—Lord Salisbury, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), and the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), really intended to promote assassination and murder. I am sure that that was not the intention of any of these Gentlemen; but certainly their words can have no other effect. To suppose for a moment that any section of the population of Ireland will ever, under any ordinary circumstances, take the field against the British Government and the armed Forces of the British Government, is to suppose an absurd impossibility. To suppose that it should be possible to incite the Orangemen of Ulster, numbering, certainly, not more than 15,000 or 20,000 men, all told—[Colonel WARING: Oh, oh!] Well, certainly in some of the estimates recently made some of their spokesmen seemed to have counted all the women and children, and even the very young children, as well as the men. To suppose that the Orangemen of Ulster, who, though they swore and have threatened several times to rebel, have never yet rebelled, but who have very frequently, as I have already said, indulged in the pastime at different periods of the year of murdering and attempting to murder their Catholic fellow-countrymen and neighbours, to suppose that it is possible for these people to rebel is the very height of absurdity. We all know now that the science of war has been brought to such a pitch of perfection that in a country like Ireland—why, it would be almost the same thing for John Bull to go out and fight a pitched battle in his back garden as it would be for him to carry on a war in Ireland. It would be utterly impossible for any body of men, no matter how warlike, if they were even as courageous as the hon. and gallant Member for Armagh (Major Saunderson), to hold out for 24 hours against the Irish Constabulary, much less against the strength of the British Army. So that we may put out of our heads altogether the notion of Orangemen rising, or that there is any necessity for passing this measure for the purpose of preventing open and armed resistance to the Forces of the Crown. But, undoubtedly, experience has shown us that there does exist indeed an apprehension at the present moment that there may be murder and assassination committed by Orangemen in Ulster, possibly at the next General Election—probably at any time. These threats have been published to the world. But they do not mean fight—they mean murder.

Major SAUNDERSON: No.

Mr. PARNELL: The hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh has spoken on the subject—his words are on record as stating that he would beat the Nationalist Members when they came canvassing the Ulster constituencies, and that it would be done by the bullet, and not by the ballot.

Major SAUNDERSON: I never said anything of the kind anywhere.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: You did. [*Cries of* "Withdraw!"]

Mr. PARNELL: The hon. and gallant Gentleman certainly did say, prior to the last Election, that that Election would be decided in Ulster by the bullet, and not by the ballot.

Major SAUNDERSON: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Gentleman; but I never said anything of the kind.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Yes, you did.

Major SAUNDERSON: Perhaps the House will allow me to state what I did say. The speech referred to was one I made in County Monaghan in commenting on a speech made by the hon. and learned Member for South Londonderry (Mr. T. M. Healy) that the Orangemen of Ulster would not be overcome by the ballot, but by the bullet.

Mr. PARNELL: I can only say that I have a distinct recollection to the contrary—[*Cries of* "Order!"]

Major SAUNDERSON: Read my speech.

Mr. PARNELL: And that my statement of what the hon. and gallant Gentleman said is correct; but I do not wish to insist on it in view of the disclaimer of the hon. and gallant Gentleman; but I will ask the hon. and gallant Member whether, in seconding a vote of thanks to Lord Salisbury of Saturday last, he stated that there would be plenty of customers for the gunmakers shortly?

Major SAUNDERSON: Yes, in London; not in Ireland.

Mr. PARNELL: We have heard of the hon. and gallant Member carrying the war into Carthage; but I did not know that the hon. and gallant Member was going to extend his warlike operations to the larger field of London. For, apart from the hon. and gallant Member, some time past we have had examples of riotous and tumultuous meetings in Ireland on the part of the Orangemen of the North, where thousands of them have come together armed with revolvers—where sackloads of revolvers have been taken from them, according to the statement of a late Chief Secretary, and where they have kept up a fire from these revolvers into the air by hundreds and thousands for many minutes. I do not apprehend that demonstrations on such a large scale as that will be repeated by the Orangemen of Ulster at the coming General Election; they did not attempt anything of the kind against us at the last General Election; but it is possible there may be isolated attempts on a small scale to create riot and disturbance, and that they may result in the taking of the lives of some inoffensive Nationalists. But, however this may be, from the point of view of equal justice we think that before we are asked to agree to the second reading of this Bill the Chief Secretary should tell us that he intends to see it fairly and justly administered as between the two sides, and that as the Orangemen under the operation of the 4th sub-section of Section 4 of the expiring Act have power to arm themselves, and Catholics are prevented from doing so, that that will be undone, and that in every case where arms are known to be in the hands of dangerous people, by licence previously given or otherwise, that licence will be taken away. That is a fair and reasonable request to make, and it is one that ought not to be refused. It is a mockery to introduce the Bill and say it shall only be applied to three-fourths of the country. If this law is to pass at all, it ought to be applied equally against all sections of the people. When I first entered the House of Commons, 11 years ago, an Arms Act was under discussion, and I felt humiliated at the feeling that came over me that I, who had just come from my constituency, then full of hope, that the right of making her own laws would shortly be restored to Ireland, and no other feeling, that I should find the House of Commons of that day was only willing to devote its attention to a Bill to disarm the people of Ireland. We are now entering upon better days. I do not feel depressed because the right hon. Gentleman has introduced this Bill. I admit there may be some reason why at present, and considering the condition of a portion of the country, the hands of the Government might be fortified by some such measure as this. But that reason is not one created by anything on the part of the Nationalists; it is not the fault of the Nationalists that it has to be done. I do not feel depressed or alarmed at the prospect before us. The present House of Commons is composed very largely indeed of Gentlemen who have shown themselves desirous of seeing how far they can go in the direction of giving power of self-government to Ireland; and I am convinced that when the time comes when this House shall have entrusted to all sections of Irishmen the power to make their own laws, the necessity for passing an Act like this to be used against any section of Irishmen shall have disappeared, and disappeared for ever.

MAJOR SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.) said, after the remarks which had been made, he thought it necessary to offer a few words in explanation of what he said at the meeting on Saturday last. He then tried to explain to the audience the exact position that the Loyalists should be placed in in Ireland if the Bill now before the House was carried; and he pointed out that, from the character given of a certain section of Irishmen by the Prime Minister himself, the Loyalists were forced to look upon the advent to power of the section to whom he referred from the same point of view as a London shopkeeper would look upon the substitution of the present London Police Force by a force consisting of the murderers, thieves, burglars, and pickpockets of London—a change which he anticipated would impel the peaceable citizens of London to buy arms for their own defence, and so make the fortunes of the gundealers. He considered that he was justified in stating this, because the Prime Minister himself, some four and a-half years ago, described the Party led by the hon. Member for Cork as a Party who preached the gospel of plunder, whose steps were dogged by crime, and who were marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire. He (Major Saunderson) therefore considered his illustration as a very happy and appropriate one. It was not his intention to oppose the Bill. The reason why the Act did not apply to one part of Ireland was that that portion was not under the domination of the National League. The hon. Member had accused Orangemen of murder; but he had not supported the charge by mentioning a single case, and for the reason that such an instance could not be found. [An hon. MEMBER: Philip Maguire.] He did not wish to rake up the list of crimes for which the National League was responsible. He wondered, however, that when the hon. Member for Cork spoke thus of Orangemen he did not embrace the opportunity of denouncing the horrible and brutal murders which were taking place in other parts of Ireland. He had said that they had arrived at happier times. He (Major Saunderson) thought in one sense they had, for he believed they were approaching a settlement of the Irish Question, and a settlement which would be final, and the settlement would be this—that the constituencies of England would decide by an overwhelming majority that the authority of the Queen should be permanently maintained in Ireland, and that the authority of the hon. Member for Cork and his Friends should never be substituted for it.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): Perhaps the House will allow me to make a few remarks, which I think will have strict reference to the Bill before it, upon the manner in which the Bill has been approached, and also in the nature of a personal explanation, in answer to the attacks made upon myself personally from more than one quarter of the House. I very much regret I was not in my place when the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) was speaking, having been called out of the House on business. I understand the hon. Member for Cork stated that, in his opinion, I had been guilty of unintentionally inciting to murder and assassination. Of course, that is an opinion which the hon. Member is entitled to hold. At the same time it is a very serious accusation; and I think that any Member of the House, sitting upon one Front Bench or the other, having held Office or holding it, who even unintentionally incites to murder and assassination is quite unworthy to have a place in the House of Commons. And for a Member who intentionally incites to murder and assassination, the proper place for him would be a Court of Justice. The right hon. and learned Member for Bury (Sir Henry James), speaking the other day, without any possibility of mistake as to whom he was alluding, stated that in consequence of language I had used I was half a traitor. The Chief Secretary also holds, I know, that this Bill is necessitated, to a considerable extent, by the feeling of a certain portion of the Irish people in the North, and by the preparation they may be making for forcible resistance in certain circumstances. I understand from what he said the other day, in answer to a Question put to him by the hon. Member for Londonderry, that the Bill was specially intended to apply to the prevention of armed bodies in the North of Ireland.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: If the noble Lord had been in the House, he would have heard the explanation I have given of that observation, and the defence I have made for it.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I am very sorry, and I apologize to the right hon. Gentleman. I understand, then, that the Government does not mean to apply this Bill to armed bodies in the North of Ireland. But I would ask the House to give me permission to do my best to clear myself of a very serious accusation, and at the same time, if possible, for the purpose of this debate, to eliminate this question to a considerable extent from future discussion. What I said was this—I have not my words before me, but I have a very clear recollection of them—that in certain circumstances, and in the event of a certain portion of the Irish people being placed under the legislative control of another Legislative Assembly than this Imperial Parliament, the Loyalists of Ulster, or that portion of the Irish people to whom I alluded, would, in all probability, resort to forcible resistance.

Mr. SEXTON (Sligo, S.): You said they ought to do it.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I did not. Hon. Members in that quarter of the House will please understand that I am not desirous of shirking the question. What I said was that in circumstances such as they apprehended they would be right in resorting to arms. I maintain, and I defy contradiction, that what I have laid down is the Constitutional doctrine accepted in this country ever since the days of the Revolution of 1688. Before I come to that point let me say this—that in the language I used I have the most distinguished Predecessors. In 1833, Lord Althorp—a name which will not be received, I think, with derision by hon. Members opposite—declared that if he had to choose between Repeal of the Union and civil war he would choose civil war. Lord Althorp was a great Whig statesman, who exercised an influence over the House of Commons which has never been equalled by anyone previously or since. Sir Robert Peel, in the same debate, declared that in maintaining the Union the Government might have not only to rely on the scaffold, but to drench the plains of Ireland with blood. These, at any rate, are two great authorities as to the effects which would be produced on Ireland by the Repeal of the Union. At any rate, I think the House will admit that my language was certainly within the limits laid down by Lord Althorp and Sir Robert Peel. Hon. Members will, I hope, endeavour to exercise a judicial function in this matter. Which is the stronger? To say if, in certain circumstances, a portion of the Irish people were to be placed under a domination to which they could be called upon to owe no allegiance rightfully, and they use force, they would be right in so doing; or, on the other hand, to say, like Lord Althorp, that, having to choose between civil war and repeal, he would choose civil war; or, again, to say, like Sir Robert Peel, that in maintaining the Union we should not only have to use the scaffold, but deluge the plains of Ireland with blood? I appeal to the honesty and generosity of hon. Members below the Gangway to say whether I was not right in doing so? [*Home Rules cries of* "No, no!"] It is no use making an appeal to hon. Members below the Gangway; but, at any rate, I appeal to the general body of the House, and certainly to the general body of the public outside. The right hon. and learned Member for Bury declared that in the language I used I was half a traitor. [Sir HENRY JAMES dissented.] Oh, yes, you did; there is no doubt in my mind, or in that of anyone else, as to whom the right hon. and learned Gentleman referred. The right hon. and learned Gentleman professes to be a distinguished Whig lawyer. [Captain VERNEY: No, no!] I am glad the hon. and gallant Member for Buckinghamshire sees, as I do, the impropriety of that profession. The right hon. and learned Member for Bury preached to the House the other night what I can only call the unmitigated doctrine of Divine right. To defend myself and to meet the right hon. and learned Gentleman's charge, I will turn to the highest historical authority in this House, the Chief Secretary for Ireland. The Chief Secretary has written many historical essays of immense interest, and I may say of literary beauty. Of all those historical essays none is more interesting than that on Robespierre. In that essay occurs this decisive passage—

> "Modern publicists have substituted the Divine right of Assemblies for the old Divine right of Monarchs. We confess ourselves unable to follow this transfer of the superstition of sacro-sanctity from a King to a Chamber. No doubt, the sooner a nation acquires settled government the better for it, provided the government be efficient. But if it be not efficient the mischief of actively suppressing it may well be fully outweighed by the mischief of retaining it."

Now, I am under the impression that the Ulstermen hold that the Government of Ireland will be transferred from one centre to another; and they will also hold that the Government, as so transferred, will not be an efficient Government. That doctrine is widely held in Ulster; and what I want to know from the Party opposite is, do they mean, by their adhesion to the argument of the right hon. and learned Member for Bury, that Divine right—a doctrine which I thought was entirely exploded in this country—attaches to the acts of this Parliament any more than it attached to the acts of a despotic Monarch? I am trying to show the House that I did not transgress the lines of accepted Constitutional doctrine in this country. Will hon. Members in any quarter of the House deny that allegiance is conditional? The allegiance of Ulster is given to this Parliament on condition that it affords to the inhabitants of Ulster protection. ["Hear, hear!" *and* "No, no!"] Certainly; that is the condition, and if this Parliament transfers the lives and the liberties of the inhabitants of Ulster to a Body over which this Parliament will have no control—absolutely none—then I hold that no Divine right attaches to such acts of legislation; and if such legislation should lead to civil war it is impossible to contend that the inhabitants who took part in that civil war would be guilty of treason. That undoubtedly is the view which I hold, and I shall never be ashamed of expressing it. If hon. Members think so badly of it, why have they not brought forward the Motion of Censure which the hon. Member for Sligo (Mr. Sexton) gave Notice of, and which has since been taken off the Paper, and we have not heard anything about it? I believe that view is held not only by myself, but by two other persons held in considerable respect in this country—I mean Lord Salisbury, and by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain). Not only do I believe that these doctrines are held by the persons I have mentioned, but I believe they are also held by the Prime Minister of this country. In the Autumn of 1884 a debate took place on a subject which many hon. Members will recollect—the Aston riots. It will be recollected that I had a contest with the right hon. Member for West Birmingham on that point. There was an animated debate and a division, and I believe that in that division my views were supported by the then Irish Party. ["No!"] I know that we had a strong division, and I think that Party went strongly in my support. In that debate I accused the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham with inciting to violence, and I quoted a passage in which he said that 100,000 men from Birmingham could be got to march on London. The Prime Minister defended the right hon. Gentleman, and seemed rather to sympathize with the contemplated march. ["No!"] At any rate, there was nothing in his speech disapproving of it. But in that speech there occurred this most remarkable passage, which singularly bears out what I have stated, showing that the right hon. Gentleman holds very much the same doctrine as Lord Salisbury laid down. The Premier alluded to the statement of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham as to the march of 100,000 men on London, and he said—

> "That statement is treated by the Marquess of Salisbury as an incitement to violence. . . . Do you think, Sir, that under these circumstances it is the duty of Ministers, or of anybody else, to go to the people of this country, when they have the formidable obstacles in their front that they have now, and say to them—'Love order and hate violence?" It is certainly one's duty to advise the people to love order and hate violence; but am I to say nothing else? Am I to make no appeals to them? Am I never to remind them of the dignity and the force that attach to the well-considered resolutions of a great nation? Are we to cast aside all the natural, legitimate, and powerful weapons of our warfare? I would go all lengths to exclude violence, and on that ground I object to the speech of the Marquess of Salisbury."

Now, let the House mark what follows. The right hon. Gentleman says—

> "But, while I eschew violence, I cannot—I will not—adopt that effeminate method of speech which is to hide from the people of this country the cheering fact that they may derive some encouragement from the recollection of former struggles, from the recollection of the great qualities of their forefathers, and from the consciousness that they possess them still. Sir, I am sorry to say that if no instructions had ever been addressed in political crises to the people of this country except to remember to hate violence and love order and exercise patience, the liberties of this country would never have been attained."

It is perfectly easy for me, addressing the Loyalists of Ulster, to substitute the Ulster controversy for the Reform controversy, and so to come within the doctrine laid down by the Prime Minister. Under these circumstances, I consider that I am in no way whatever liable to the charge of having, intentionally or unintentionally, incited to murder and assassination. I have said before the country, as I thought it was my duty to do, what I believed would be the consequences of such legislation as is proposed by the present Government. I believe that those consequences would be civil war; and if the consequences of that legislation were such as to lead to civil war those who took part in resisting those consequences would be right. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!" *and* "Shame!"] And no exclamation or denunciation from hon. Members below the Gangway will make me recede one inch or one iota from that opinion. I have shown that the language that I used was language which fell short of that used many years ago by authorities far greater than any that the House can boast now; and fortified by those authorities and by the Constitutional doctrine, as laid down by the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, I regard with equal indifference either the censure of the Irish Members, or the censure of the right hon. and learned Member for Bury.

Sir HENRY JAMES (Bury, Lancashire): I am not, Sir, about to enter into any discussion with the noble Lord as to whether or not the abstract doctrine which he has laid down to-night is deserving the sanction of the House. I shall only refer to the personal matter which he has introduced. He has said—and said in a tone which I must regret, as it seemed to me to be a very bitter tone—that in the course of the debate I had spoken without any mistake as to whom I was referring, and that I had called the noble Lord "half a traitor." Now, I really do not know why the noble Lord should have applied my words to himself. I am in the recollection of the House when I state that I referred to no one in the course of what I said; I endeavoured to remove what I addressed to the House as far as I could from the atmosphere of any personal attack or animadversion; and I assure the noble Lord—and I ask him to accept the assurance—that when I was speaking the noble Lord was not in my mind. I can state to the noble Lord that when I so spoke I had not read the letter of the noble Lord. It was brought to my attention afterwards. I had not found time to read it, or many other things in the newspapers; and if I had intended to attack the noble Lord I would certainly have given him personal notice of it previously. He is aware that I made no such communication to him; and I say in his presence that I was not referring to him. The noble Lord says that I quoted his words. Will he say what words of his I quoted? For I did not know what his words were on Thursday, and I could not have quoted them. Having given the noble Lord that assurance, I wish to state to the House now that I have not one word to withdraw. I am anxious that the Loyalists of Ulster should fight their battle, but that they should fight it within this House, and by Constitutional methods, and I thought that I was strengthening them by pointing out that those loyal men who wished strongly to protest against the proposed legislation would fight better, and would have more allies, if dangerous language were not used so as to weaken their cause, and if they would confine themselves within the bounds of Constitutional discussion. I will not follow the noble Lord in his remarks. I am afraid that what I am about to say is somewhat opposed to what he has said; but I believe there could be no greater calamity to this country than if we were to see men fighting—I say nothing about the question of the Divine right of Kings or of Parliaments—but to see them fighting against the Throne, and fighting, as at last they might have to do, against the troops of the Queen, of whom they are, as I believe, most loyal subjects. I would say, without wishing to offend the noble Lord personally—that I would do a great deal to prevent the possibility of such a lamentable state of things occurring. I confess that I cannot agree in what I have just heard fall from the noble Lord; but I pass away from the subject, remarking that it is a most dangerous discussion. The words which the noble Lord used may be misunderstood; and I would venture to suggest to him that if he would throw his great abilities, his great energy, and his great influence into the struggle on behalf of the Ulstermen by endeavouring to protect them by Constitutional means, instead of using language of a doubtful character which may be misconstrued, he will act, as I am sure he desires to act, as a loyal supporter of order.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: The right hon. and learned Gentleman has misunderstood me. What I referred to was action after all Constitutional means had been exhausted.

SIR HENRY JAMES: I was only indicating the difficulties that might arise if some men should draw the inference that the time has come when Constitutional means are exhausted, and others should draw a different inference. But my object is not to enter into the controversy. I hope I have satisfied the noble Lord that I intended no personal attack upon him; but, at the same time, I do not withdraw anything that I said the other night, having then said only what I believed it to be my duty to say.

MR. LEWIS (Londonderry) said, he had strenuously supported the renewal of the Peace Preservation Act of 1881, because he regarded it as necessary to good government, peace, and order. From that position he did not flinch. It was important, however, that the House should understand what the Government meant by coercion. He had understood that the programme, the leading principle of the Liberal Party and of the present Ministry, in dealing with Ireland, was that under no circumstances whatever would they ever have anything to do with repressive legislation or coercion; but the Bill did not bear out that idea. That night they had a Coercion Bill put down as the first Order of the Day, and the second Order was what was intended as a measure of conciliation. They had heard much of "judicious mixtures" with regard to Irish legislation; but the Government now proposed an injudicious mixture of coercion and conciliation. From what had passed that evening it was clear that an agreement had been arrived at between the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) and the Government, on the one hand, that the Bill should be allowed to pass, and, on the other, that the obnoxious Sub-section 4, in Clause 2, should be struck out, although he (Mr. Lewis) admitted that he added the words "and elsewhere." Why did the Chief Secretary name the North of Ireland at all for? Why need he have named Ulster, except the Act was to be used for the purpose of oppressing them? The right hon. Gentleman had not explained the pertinence of his reference to the North of Ireland. The facts were that the Act had hitherto been used in parts of Ireland where different creeds and different politics were not mingled; and they were justified, therefore, in viewing with some amount of suspicion the peculiar way in which the Act was to be amended in order to meet the views of the hon. Member for Cork, and in order to use it for the purpose of oppressing the Orangemen and Protestants in the North of Ireland, who had hitherto been free from the restrictions of the Bill, which had only applied to the disloyal portion of the community. When the present Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced this Bill in 1881 he observed, referring to language which had been used by the chief lieutenant of the hon. Member for Cork—

> "To-morrow every subject of the Queen will know that the doctrine so expounded is the doctrine of treason and of assassination."—(3 *Hansard*, [259] 160.)

That was the reply which the right hon. Gentleman then made, in the presence of the whole House, to the observation of the chief lieutenant of the hon. Member for Cork that—

> "It was lawful for the tenant to shoot his landlord if he would not reduce his rent."

Forsooth, it laid in the mouth of the hon. Member for Cork to make charges against the Orange and loyal portion of the community of Ireland as he had that night. He could not but wonder at the intrepidity, not to say the audacity, of the hon. Member. The hon. Member had declared that Orangemen were very willing to assassinate, or to attempt to assassinate, those who differed from their political opinions—that they were accustomed to the pastime of murder and attempting to murder, and that murders and assassinations might be expected from the Orangemen at the next General Election. Hon. Members, however, would recollect the old fable of the wolf and the lamb; and he left it to the House to ascertain from the history of the last five or six years which Party in Ireland was most likely to play the part of the wolf and which that of the lamb. In which parts of Ireland had murders and assassinations been most rife and most vigorously defended? Had they been perpetrated by the loyal and Protestant inhabitants of the North of Ireland, or by the wicked emissaries of the National League, under the immediate superintendence, protection, and assent of the hon. Member for Cork? ["Order!"]

Mr. SPEAKER: The language which the hon. Member has used is not Parliamentary. He has said that murder and assassination were done under the immediate superintendence, sanction, and direction of the hon. Member for Cork. That is not according to the Rules of the House, and I call on the hon. Member to withdraw.

Mr. LEWIS said, he would withdraw the observation; but in extenuation of it he must remind the House that he was answering a charge which had been brought by the hon. Member for Cork against the Orangemen and Protestants of Ulster that they were willing and accustomed to assassinate.

Mr. PARNELL: I said nothing about Protestants.

Mr. LEWIS said, they were arrived at this point—the Government on the one hand, and the hon. Member for Cork on the other, were content to have a measure of coercive and repressive legislation for Ireland. The Government had been very backward in coming forward with the Act. They now proposed that it should be continued for two years. He (Mr. Lewis) protested against that mode of dealing with the law for Ireland. They had better pass a general Act, and repeal it when it was no longer required. The position of the Government was one of absolute inconsistency, for in proposing this measure of coercion they cut right at the root and principle of the other measure for Ireland that was before the House.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.) said, that some of the explanations made to the House, so far as some Members were concerned, were hardly necessary. The *quasi*-apology of the right hon. and learned Member for Bury (Sir Henry James) to the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) was scarcely required. He thought that those Gentlemen might have allowed matters to remain as they were, and let everybody draw his own conclusions. When he heard the speech of the noble Lord in regard to the remarks of the right hon. and learned Member for Bury about "half a traitor," he was reminded of the term once applied by the right hon. Member for Blackburn (Sir Robert Peel) to an hon. Member, whom he called "a mannikin traitor." If the right hon. and learned Gentleman had used that phrase, he would, perhaps, have been nearer the mark. Now, it appeared to him that the noble Lord was under some necessity of giving a long explanation to the House of the Constitutionalism of his views. If he had been so long-winded, if he had been obliged to give at such length his meaning to the Orangemen in the Ulster Hall, Belfast, he was afraid that the Orangemen of Belfast would have been rather dissatisfied with their champion. There were, no doubt, some other Gentlemen who would have been obliged to explain their language, were it not that the noble Lord and his Friends had seen the necessity for putting a certain amount of bridle rein upon hon. Gentlemen from Ulster sitting beside him. They had noticed a very considerable change of tone in the speeches of those Gentlemen of late. Complaints had been made of the change of tone of the Irish Party; but what was much more remarkable was the silence of hon. Members from the Orange Lodges in Ulster. The noble Lord did not consider that the speeches which they would make to the House would be very effective at present. They had not been so moderate elsewhere in their language. Those hon. Gentlemen were now "cooing like sucking doves" in the House, and stating that they did not mean what they had previously said at all. Perhaps that was done with a view to an early appearance at the polls. They were lambs in fact, for the hon. Member for Derry (Mr. Lewis) had said that "it is the case of the wolf and the lamb," he being, of course, one of the lambs. He would ask the attention of the House to some of the speeches of the hon. and gallant Gentleman below the Gangway who now tried to explain the statement—that they intended to resort to arms. The noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill) thought it now necessary to make an apology for his Belfast speech——

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: No; I made no apology.

MR. T. M. HEALY said, he would say that the noble Lord had found it necessary to make not an "apology," but an "explanation." He would quote from a speech by the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Major Saunderson) made at Portadown, which was reported in *The Lurgan News* of February 27 last, which would, perhaps, be interesting to the noble Lord. He said at the beginning of his speech—

> "When I was at Chester and attended the meeting, I looked around and saw that when reference was made to Lord Salisbury half the audience cheered, and whenever Mr. Gladstone was mentioned the other half cheered. By these means I found the audience was pretty evenly divided, and I spoke accordingly."

So he (Mr. T. M. Healy) presumed that these Gentlemen found that, opinion in the House being pretty equally divided on certain questions, it was necessary for them to arrange their language accordingly. In a further part of his speech he said—

> "Before I sit down I wish to say that this English meeting, composed of Liberals and Conservatives, went their way with great enthusiasm. When I said that before we allowed Gladstone and his Party to hand us over to Parnell and his gang we were resolved to resort to arms."

The hon. and gallant Gentleman was further on reported to have said—

> "I was speaking to Lord Randolph Churchill."

What would the right hon. and learned Member for Bury, who spoke of "half traitors," say to this?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I must call the attention of the hon. and learned Member to the fact that these remarks bear very remotely upon the Arms (Ireland) Bill.

MR. T M. HEALY said, he, of course, bowed to the ruling of the Chair; but he thought that as the noble Lord had been allowed to refer at great length to the Aston riots, he (Mr. T. M. Healy) might have referred——

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I allowed the noble Lord a certain latitude because the noble Lord was meeting a charge made against him. The matter is for the judgment of the House; but I put it to the House whether there should be a continuance of these personal recriminations?

MR. T. M. HEALY said, that the quotation was strictly in point, and had reference to arming, which this Bill was intended to prevent. The hon. and gallant Member, in the same speech, went on to say—

> "Speaking of Lord Randolph, he asked what force we could raise if it came to civil war?"

That was strictly pertinent to the question.

> "I said—'Come over and see.' He came over, and goes back, knowing that Ulster is at least prepared to strike a blow for Ireland."

[*Opposition cheers.*] He was quite satisfied if hon. Members were; but he should like to ask the Government whether an Act of this kind was sufficient to deal with the instructions issued to the Orangemen? The words of the instructions issued to the Orangemen made it clear, as he maintained, that the provisions of that Bill were not suitable to the North of Ireland, and required considerable amendment. The hon. Member for Derry (Mr. Lewis) thought that he and his Party were "lambs," and that this Act was necessary in Ireland, but not for the Orange Society. The Irish Party were accused of speaking recklessly; but he would defy anybody to quote from the speeches of Nationalists on many platforms, and in the many Proclamations which were signed on behalf of the National League, passages which were at all comparable with the Proclamations issued by hon. Members above the Gangway, and he asked what steps the Government proposed to take to put them down? A great many foolish things might be said in the heat of the moment; but these Proclamations were deliberately written, and issued by the heads of the Orange Party, and he wanted to know what protection from them the people of Ireland were to get by the Bill? To give an idea of the state of things that prevailed in Ulster, he might say that, at a meeting reported by *The Daily Express*, Lord Rossmore said that the soldiers and police were the friends of the Orangemen. A voice in the crowd said that there were 400 Orangemen in one regiment—a statement which was received with cheers. They were further told that—

> "At this point shots were fired, and immediately hundreds of revolvers were produced, and it was no exaggeration to say that for fully ten minutes a steady fusilade was maintained."

There were several shots fired off in his (Mr. T. M. Healy's) hearing. These "law-abiding lambs" of the hon. Member for Derry were badly in want of a shepherd. Cries were freely uttered of "Shoot Biggar and Healy," although in the South it was regarded as a terrible thing for there to be a cry of "Shoot the landlords." At a meeting at which the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh was present, the Orangemen were told to be ready with their "sweethearts," meaning revolvers, and plenty of "stuff," by which ammunition was intended. In a Proclamation issued by the Deputy Grand Master of Armagh, it was said that the meeting was to be "of a semi-religious kind"—that meant that weapons were to be concealed. It was also said that the Grand Master was anxious to give no offence to their opponents, and Orangemen were to observe the sanctity of the Sabbath. The Proclamation went on to say that Orangemen were to do their utmost to keep together, and that no man was to wander from his friends—that they were to bring colours, and, if possible, a copy of Sankey's Hymns. The meaning of Sankey's Hymns was well understood in Ireland, and among the Orange Body. It was well understood by the "lambs." He need scarcely say that it meant revolvers.

MAJOR SAUNDERSON: I never heard the expression before.

MR. T. M. HEALY said, that if the hon. and gallant Member did not know it he must be badly acquainted with the vocabulary of the Orange Lodges.

MR. JOHNSTON: I most emphatically deny the meaning placed on the words by the hon. and learned Member.

MR. T. M. HEALY said, he was glad that, even at the eleventh hour, the Orange Party saw the necessity of denying the real meaning of these Proclamations. He maintained, however, that the language used was understood by the brethren in the way he had indicated. Why should Sankey's Hymns be brought to a political meeting? There was, however, another phrase which he hoped the hon. Gentleman would explain—the recommendation to the Orangemen to bring to the meetings "their sweethearts and plenty of stuff." Did the Orange Order issue a special dictionary to read these expressions by, or had they a special glossary of slang? The point was—How were these words understood in Ireland, and by the Orangemen? Obviously "sweethearts" meant rifles, and "plenty of stuff" ammunition. It would also be difficult to explain how it was that after some of the meetings "sackfuls of revolvers" were found by the police. He would take another speech of the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh, which he would quote from the ever-faithful *Daily Express* of the 11th of January, 1884. In that speech it was stated that unless the Nationalists, who were spoken of as having devoted their lives and talents to undermining the authority of the Crown, had not been protected during a visit to Ulster by soldiers and police they would have left it in a different state to that in which they entered it.

Major SAUNDERSON: Hear, hear!

Mr. T. M. HEALY: "Hear, hear!" If the hon. and gallant Member was satisfied, so was he; but if that was the spirit in which hon. and gallant Gentlemen, magistrates and Deputy Lieutenants, acted, they ought not to be placed in the position of issuing orders under this Act. The granting of licences for arms was, in the North of Ireland, to a great extent in the hands of Orange magistrates. He should like to know how many licences for "sweethearts" the hon. and gallant Member for North Down had granted?

Colonel WARING: None at all.

Major SAUNDERSON: Nor I.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said, that, no doubt, was due to the fact, which he had forgotten, that the district in which those hon. and gallant Gentlemen lived had not been proclaimed; and the people did not, therefore, require licences to carry arms. The most inflammatory language had been used by Orange magistrates, and men such as the son of the late Duke of Abercorn, and the brother of a Cabinet Minister. In 1883, when the Parnellites were addressing meetings in Ulster, Lord Claud Hamilton, in a speech, said that if the Government did not prevent Ulster being invaded by a horde of ruffians (the Parnellites) they would take the law into their own hands. That was the language which the noble Lord was not ashamed to use in Derry; but, notwithstanding all the noble Lord's opposition and his brave words, he (Mr. T. M. Healy) now represented Derry County in that House. The Nationalists had made their raid into the county, and they had only been beaten in the city where the noble Lord delivered his speech by 29 votes, 20 of them having been given by soldiers. What he wished to impress upon the House was this—that they were not afraid that the incitements of the noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill) and the right hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) would lead to civil war—they were all a sham; they had heard them all before. They only feared that individual murders and outrages would be the result of them. He challenged any person to produce from the speeches of the Irish Members any language equalling in violence the language now used by persons in high positions. It was in consequence of language such as that that they had Philip Maguire murdered after the Monaghan Election, and a priest shot at some time ago by certain gentlemen under the pretence that they were shooting at a target. But he would remind the noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill) that it was not Orangemen alone who read this language. It was read also by Fenians and Extremists. The noble Lord's language with regard to Ulster might well be seized by the Fenians, and who, adopting the noble Lord's argument, might say—"The Irish Parliament was taken away by bribery and corruption; the Act of Union never had any moral sanction; and armed resistance to it was merely a question of expediency." The noble Lord had, by such words, lighted a fire which, if it were not for the appeasing measure of the Prime Minister, might very easily be kindled into a big conflagration, which would astonish the noble Lord. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham also wrote a letter—and written words had always more seriousness attached to them than spoken words—which was as strong a Proclamation as to the rights of resistance as anything that Emmett could have issued. He wrote—

> "The fate of this Province is in the hands of its own people, and if they are really in earnest"

—how well chosen, but how barbed, every one of those words was—

> "in refusing to intrust their liberties and fortunes to the control of a Central Parliament in Dublin it is not likely that their fellow-subjects in England and Scotland will suffer them to be coerced into submission."

But let that language be translated into the Fenian dialect, omit Ulster and substitute Ireland, and in the place of

Orangemen put in Nationalists, and the argument would run—

> "The fate of this nation is in the hands of its own people, and if they are really in earnest in refusing to intrust their liberties and fortunes to the control of a Central Parliament in London, it is not likely that their fellow-countrymen in America will suffer them to be coerced."

Declarations such as that, though they certainly would not lead to civil war, would certainly lead to outrage. When they were told that "crime dogged the steps of the Land League," he answered that crime would dog the steps of the noble Lord and the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. Chamberlain); and he challenged either of them, in the very worst of the Land League speeches they considered to have been delivered, to find any declarations more directly leading to bloodshed and incendiarism than speeches and declarations such as those they had just listened to. The Arms Act, as it was drawn, was not calculated to put down that mischief. The Lord Lieutenant had power to proclaim any portion of the country which he considered necessary, and yet he had not proclaimed Down, Antrim, or Derry; and although every other port in Ireland was proclaimed Belfast and Derry were not.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY said, the importation of arms into Belfast was now only permitted under the terms of the Lord Lieutenant's recent Proclamation.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said, the number of convictions in proclaimed districts in the year 1883 was only 73 throughout Ireland, and yet it had been asserted that sacks full of revolvers had been seized. Hon. Members were acquainted with the case of John M'Carthy, of Loughrea, in whose house the rusty half of a Queen Anne pistol was found. M'Carthy was had up before two magistrates, who gave him three months' hard labour. That occurred immediately after the passing of the Act in 1881. No doubt he would be told, by way of explanation, that M'Carthy was a suspect. The Act was practically allowed in the North of Ireland to be a dead letter. The law, to be of use, ought not to be an Act which required to be enforced by the Lord Lieutenant; but an Act applying to the whole of Ireland, without invidious distinction of counties. The effects of the present state of the law were mainly perceptible during harvest time in the South of Ireland. In one field last year you absolutely could not see the ground for the crows and rooks. He stated that positively. There were tens of thousands of rooks gathered on the unfortunate farmers' corn-fields. Such was the effect of the law in the South of Ireland, while Gentlemen who used language like that of the noble Lord and the hon. Member for North Armagh could get what licences they wanted. The Act was vicious in principle. It let the big fish escape through the net, and did not mesh the real criminals. He invited the Government to consider whether the measure, as at present framed, was one tending for the wished-for ends, or whether some important improvements upon it could not be made? As far as the three Southern Provinces of Ireland were concerned, such was the feeling of pacification and appeasement brought about by the measure of the Prime Minister, and such was the feeling of sincere friendship and desire to bring about a better state of things, that this Bill would affect them very slightly indeed; and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would live to see the day when, under the operation of his beneficent measure, no other Arms Act would be required for Ireland.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) said, that the remarks of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) in relation to this Bill were of so grave a nature that he could not pass them by without notice. He understood the noble Lord to say that he only advised resort to arms in Ulster when all Constitutional means had failed; and that was said, not in heat and excitement, but in calm explanation to the right hon. and learned Member for Bury (Sir Henry James) as a sufficient justification of language used in Belfast. He took leave to say that no doctrine more dangerous, no doctrine more intentionally treasonable, could possibly be preached, and he regretted that the noble Lord was not now in his place. It was a threat intended to influence the decision of that House. Why that threat? Did the noble Lord, and those with whom he worked, feel that the measure submitted to the Legislature was a measure which would command the assent of both Houses of Parliament and which would also receive the Royal Assent? If the noble Lord did not think so there would be no necessity for such a threat at all. The noble Lord was one of the Leaders of a great Party; he had been recently one of Her Majesty's principal Secretaries of State; he was "by Her Majesty's grace, one of her own Privy Council;" and yet, anticipating the time when Her Majesty should give her Royal Assent to a measure passed by the House of Commons and endorsed by the House of Lords, the noble Lord prepared for a contingency from which any lover of the State must shrink in any event, and encouraged people to adopt the notion that when petition had ceased, when speech in Parliament had ceased, when every Constitutional method was exhausted, civil war was the fitting answer to what had then become the law of the land. If the noble Lord did not mean that, all the greater the crime of his language. If he did mean it, of what use was it to proceed with Parliamentary discussion at all? But he would pass from criticism of the statesman—and that was not passing from much—to add a few words on the immorality of this incitement to, of the threats of, use of arms. Might men without the noble Lord's position make such threats? Might some demagogue who thought he had some grievance with Parliament resort to the use of such language, or was that privilege left to the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington? Was the noble Lord's threat what the French called mere *blague?* Was it a dangerous incitement to violence, intended to rouse the worst passions? Was it the voice of despair of men who had no reasonable answer to a measure of justice, and who tried to provoke violence? He regretted that the noble Lord was not in his place, for he would like to appeal from Philip after dinner to Philip earlier in the day. He had a few years ago heard—under circumstances which only enabled him to listen—the noble Lord denounce one who had peacefully assembled large bodies of men in provincial towns and in that city in order to formulate resolutions on a question then before Parliament, as seeking by force to overawe the House, and as in this guilty of conduct destitute of any excuse. And yet now to influence the decision of Parliament the noble Lord used words of incitement to civil war. If those words were used, and if blood were shed, on whose head would be the crime? He could understand that men who had not the advantage of listening to debates in that House might take the noble Lord's words *au pied de la lettre,* and might deem it their duty to fight for their Queen and their country by taking up arms against their Queen and their country, against the Parliament of England, and against its Statutes. If language had not lost its meaning, no more terrible doctrine had ever been preached than that of the noble Lord, when he said that he had only meant that the sword was to be drawn when petition had proved ineffectual, when speech in both Houses failed—when the Bill had received the assent of Parliament and the Queen. He failed to see that any words could more strongly condemn the noble Lord than those uttered in the House that evening.

MAJOR GENERAL GOLDSWORTHY (Hammersmith) said, that he was in a dilemma as to what vote he ought to give on that occasion. He was generally desirous of supporting the Government of the day in any measure stated to be necessary for the safety of the country or the due carrying on of Government; but, from many of the speeches which had recently been made in that House and "elsewhere," he had no confidence in the present Government, and had doubts as to how the law would be administered. The people of the North of Ireland were strongly opposed to civil war, and so was he; and he blamed anyone who incited to civil war; but he believed it was absolutely necessary that people who perhaps were, in a measure, withdrawn from the protection of law should be able to protect themselves. At the present moment there was a dread—and he believed a just dread—that the Loyalists of Ireland, in certain eventualities, might not be protected by law. In the South of Ireland he knew the people went about armed, and he had that day received a letter from a lady telling him that she was obliged to keep loaded firearms. The country should not be in such a state, and it was a disgrace to the nation. He wished for an impartial administration of the law, and for all people to be protected who had a right to be protected.

MR. O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.) said, he thought that if it was desirable that a law of this kind should come into force in the existing condition of Ireland, it should be a law that promised to be both just and effectual, and applicable to the whole country. The working of the existing law had been such as to encourage violence from that part of the population, from whom they now feared disorder. The Orange Party in Ulster had been allowed to supply themselves with arms, and it was notorious that arms were now being supplied to them all through Ireland, especially in Ulster, while the National Party were deprived of their means of defence, and thus subjected to danger. That was why the Orange Party were anxious that the Bill should pass. The class of arms distributed was not that which would be used in warfare, but for murder. In Ulster those arms were for the purpose of intimidating the Nationalists. The change of front amongst the Ulstermen was very instructive. The Orangemen found that as they had friends among the magistracy they would not be disarmed, while the police would be employed to disarm the Nationalists. He admitted that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary had introduced the Bill with good intentions; but had they any security that it would be locally carried out in the same spirit as that which animated the right hon. Gentleman? No; they had no guarantee that the law would be equally applied. If they wanted disarmament, disarm universally. Do not let them disarm parts only of Ireland, but let them apply it to Ulster as well. They only knew Orangemen in that House from their loyalist declarations; but in Ireland it was known that the Orange Society began in murder and continued in murder. They, therefore, objected to the power of giving or denying arms being placed in the hands of the unpaid magistracy. Who were these men? The landlords, and the Orange landlords, who armed their own satellites, and left the others unprotected—men who were interested in the maintenance of every abuse, both Governmental and social, in Ireland. Such powers should only be in the hands of a paid magistracy. What was wanted was that the law should be applied universally in Ireland. Unless the strongest measures were taken there would be bloodshed in Ulster. He himself had been fired at in Ulster. If a landlord had been fired at there would have been a great noise made; but it was otherwise with an Irish Member of Parliament. He objected to men being allowed to incite to murder. Why should not the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) and the right hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) be prosecuted for inciting to murder?—for, unless Government took the strongest measures to preserve order, before the end of the year blood would be upon the heads of those right hon. Gentlemen.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I have, unfortunately, been absent from my seat during a portion of this discussion, and I will not now refer to that portion with which the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down has dealt. All I would say with regard to that is, first, to give my assent to the principle that a law of this kind ought to be applied with the strictest impartiality. I think you will excuse me from endeavouring, at the present moment, to develop my meaning in the use of that language. It will be for a future stage, as far as the Government are concerned, or for opportunities when my right hon. Friend near me may find it necessary to go more largely into it, and to describe the particular steps which, under this Bill, the Government will find it their duty to take. I intend to advert to that portion of the evening's discussion which was touched in a speech of great force by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh). I regret extremely that I did not hear the declarations made to-night by the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill). But although I have not heard those declarations I have not only collected their effect, but I am distinctly cognizant of the language used by the noble Lord on recent occasions in speech and writings, and I understand it to be beyond doubt that the purpose of his address to-night was to justify that language. I believe that the use of such language by the noble Lord, added to the language which has been used by several Irish Members giving themselves the designation of Loyalists, must constitute a very singular event, most unusual in our proceedings and our history, and apparently calling for some distinct and specific notice from those who are intrusted with the charge of the Government of the country. I wish to explain very briefly to the House why I have distinctly and carefully avoided taking serious notice of any of these declarations. It is not because I undervalue the doctrine taught, as I understand, by the noble Lord. I will refer now, not to Ulster Members, one of whom to-night has, I believe, made some well-intentioned attempts to extenuate a portion of what he had previously said elsewhere—I refer to what has been distinctly taught by the noble Lord, a late Secretary of State, a Privy Councillor, one bound to advise the Crown when called upon to do so, a Representative of law, and charged with a special responsibility with respect to everything that touches public order and the obligations of obedience. The doctrine of the noble Lord, if I understand him—and I shall not use a single epithet if I can avoid it in the little I have to say—is distinctly and unequivocally this—a portion of the people find themselves in circumstances when a law to which they entertain strong and vehement objection, considering it unjust and oppressive, is under the consideration of Parliament. We are told that in these circumstances the duty of these persons is this. First of all, they are to exhaust Constitutional methods of opposition—that is, they are to make their sentiments known through their Representatives, through Petitions, through public meetings, and the various means that are afforded to all subjects of the Queen for unfolding in the fullest way their sentiments with regard to the intended and meditated law. But when these Constitutional means have been exhausted, then this portion of the people—so we are told by the ex-Minister of the Crown, the ex-Secretary of State, the Privy Councillor of to-day—with his approval and support, are to resort to armed resistance to the law. I am glad the senior Member for the University of Dublin (Mr. Plunket) has come into his place, because he will hear the description which I am endeavouring to give—to give without epithet, without heightening the colour—of the opinions which it appears to me beyond dispute are promulgated by the noble Lord the Member for Paddington. Ulster was the portion of the people to which the noble Lord referred. But if his doctrine is true of Ulster, it is equally true of Leinster, Munster, and Connaught—that after Constitutional means are exhausted, then arrives the period when some portion of the people, believing itself to be aggrieved by a law that the Legislature has adopted, may resort, and should resort, and should be countenanced in resorting, to the use of physical force for the purpose of resistance to the law. This reminds me, Sir, of a scene truly historic—one of the most remarkable among the many remarkable scenes which I ever witnessed in this House. It is, I think, about 35 years ago when the occasion to which I refer happened within the walls of the Commons House of Parliament, but before we had been domiciled in this great building, and when we were in what was considered a temporary House after the fire in 1834. Mr. Smith O'Brien on that occasion rose in his place; he set forth, if my memory serves me rightly, the position in which, as an Irishman, he stood. In his view all Constitutional means had been exhausted. It was a short time after the termination of Mr. O'Connell's career, and what was called justice to Ireland in the language of those days had been sought, but had not, in the view of these gentlemen, been obtained. Mr. Smith O'Brien set forth to the House of Commons in the plainest language his intention of quitting the House to repair to his country and to levy war upon the Queen by the use of every means that he could put into action. The House of Commons listened in absolute silence, with very strong but perfectly restrained feelings, to this extraordinary declaration. I will not refer to what followed. Everyone knows what was the sequel. But I want now to compare the position of Mr. Smith O'Brien with the position of the noble Lord. I really know no other parallel with the position of the noble Lord. The noble Lord does not say that Constitutional means have been exhausted. In that respect he differs from Mr. Smith O'Brien. But he agrees with Mr. Smith O'Brien in that which is really material—namely, that when the means furnished by the Constitution have been exhausted by any portion of the people disapproving any particular law, that portion of the people may take the law into their own hands and offer to it armed resistance. The other great and glaring difference besides the difference I have pointed out is this. Mr. O'Brien was a Representative of the people, but had never been an Adviser of the Queen or a Minister of the Crown; though he had upon him the obligations of a loyal subject, against which, in my opinion, he grievously transgressed, he had not upon him the special obligation which attaches to every Privy Councillor and to everyone who has had the honour of serving the Queen in a responsible position. Well, Sir, this is an extremely grave series of facts. We have the speech made in Ulster, and that speech followed by a written exposition and a written commentary, and we have to-night, as I understand—and I believe there is no question about the fact, which I am as far as possible from wishing to exaggerate—we have laid down the doctrine to which I referred, and which I will not characterize by epithets to the House. I merely state that such occurrences as these are occurrences of the utmost gravity. It may be asked why has not the Government of the day taken notice of these circumstances in debate? Why have I waited until the direct challenge of the noble Lord himself in this House, until the notice taken of these circumstances by independent Members, has, I may say, compelled something to be said from this Bench? Now, Sir, I will give such justification as I can for the silence, which I fully admit requires some justification. The reasons which have decided me to avoid all notice of these grave and painful circumstances have been these. In the first place, I well know the strength of the law, and the strength of the love of law, and the determination to maintain it in this country, to be such that no rash or culpable assault upon it, come it from whom it may, however lofty be his position, be the responsibility however great, can, in truth, do anything to weaken the foundations of public and national obedience. If we were a weaker country with less solid institutions, such occurrences as these would, in my opinion, have called for severe as well as for immediate notice. Another reason, I must say, which has encouraged me in this policy of abstention has been the fact that the language of the noble Lord has received no extenuation or apology from any of those who sit near him in the House and who have been associated with him in Office. That is a circumstance which fills me with gratification, and I will take the opportunity of saying that I am convinced, as regards those whom I now see opposite, that an overwhelming majority of the Gentlemen who occupy those Benches opposite I am perfectly convinced—while I appreciate the delicacy of the position in which they stand towards a late Colleague, and can therefore understand their silence—that, the case arising, they would give proof that their sentiments with regard to any tampering, in whatever form, with the principles of loyal obedience are precisely the same as those which prevail on this side of the House. A third reason that has governed my conduct, and as far as I have been able to make it a subject of communication I am speaking for my Colleagues, has been this—we have felt, with regard to the measures we have before the House touching the future conciliation of Ireland, that we were making large demands not only on the patience of the House, but large demands upon its generosity, upon its foresight, upon its sense of justice, and upon all those great qualities of statesmanship to which we look for the acceptance of our measures. That being so, it has been a prime duty on our part to avoid, in the discussion of those measures, the introduction of any subject likely to create angry controversy—a studious banishing, if it were possible, of whatever might stir passion, or whatever might give offence. For that reason I have felt it was right, and I think my Colleagues have felt it was right, that we should take no notice of circumstances which are undoubtedly to be considered in themselves as much marked by very great gravity of character as they are happily by the extreme rarity of their occurrence in the annals of this country. Sir, having given these reasons by way of justification for having waived what might appear to be some degree of duty imposed at all times upon persons who are responsible for exercising special watchfulness in regard to whatever touches the sanctity of the law and the undisputed prevalence of the principles of obedience, I will only say that I shall further adhere to that method of proceeding, unless an overruling necessity should compel me reluctantly to depart from it. I trust we may be spared that necessity. I believe if we came to debate any such question as that, and if we came to mix such debate with questions of passion and excitement—with questions above all things requiring the calmest and most deliberate statesmanship, then our best hopes of ministering to the future peace, prosperity, and union of this country will be seriously weakened. To avoid whatever might weaken and to pursue whatever course is best calculated to maintain them is the primary duty—incumbent, I think, on them at this moment—of the Ministers of the Crown.

Mr. PLUNKET (Dublin University): I should not have thought of taking part in this debate had it not been for the way in which the Prime Minister, on my entering the House almost accidentally in the middle of the hour ordinarily assigned to dinner, appealed to me personally. Of course, I cannot refuse to answer such an appeal; but before I say anything more I wish to state distinctly that the very few observations I shall make have been extorted from me, and have not been in any way volunteered. When I left the House a short time ago I was under the impression that you, Mr. Speaker, had laid it down from the Chair that this matter could not be gone into in a debate on the Arms Bill, and that you interrupted the speech of the hon. and learned Member for South Derry (Mr. T. M. Healy) on that ground. Therefore, when I came back and found the Prime Minister speaking, and speaking very gravely on this subject, I was amazed. I do not think I ought to say anything more on that subject. I do not know whether the Prime Minister was in the House when the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington was speaking. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] He was not in the House, and, not having been in the House, he has taken upon himself to read a lecture of the most serious kind upon the course which my noble Friend has pursued.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: My "lecture" had reference to the speech of the noble Lord in Ulster, and to the letter written recently by the noble Lord; and as to the speech of to-night, I understand it did not involve any recession on the part of the noble Lord.

Mr. PLUNKET: I must say that I understood the right hon. Gentleman was replying to the speech made by my noble Friend in this debate. Had I thought otherwise, I should have felt it to be my duty to rise to Order. I must say, Mr. Speaker, subject to your correction, that a more irregular thing than to quote a speech on a totally different subject in a debate on the Arms Bill I never heard of. I have no right, Sir, to say more on that point. I can well understand that it may have been thought to be of advantage, in the political battle which is now going on, that such a scene as this should have taken place; but I will tell the right hon. Gentleman how this matter arose. The noble Lord did not volunteer the observations he made. He was directly challenged by the hon. Member for Cork. The right hon. Gentleman has expressed a hope that the Colleagues of the noble Lord would disclaim the observations he has made. He referred to the conduct of Mr. Smith O'Brien and to the celebrated doctrine as to the circumstances under which it is or is not unconstitutional and disloyal to appeal to the *ultima ratio* of civil war when, as he said, all other appeals have been exhausted. The noble Lord has never, as far as I can recollect his speeches, laid down any general principle of that kind at all. He has pointed to certain circumstances that might arise, and said that if the authority of this Parliament were transferred to another Assembly to which a certain portion of the Irish population would not willingly have their allegiance transferred, events might happen in the midst of what would be practically a great and far-reaching revolution, in which one part of the people of Ireland might unfortunately be placed in a position in which it would be necessary for them, in defence of their rights and liberties, to have recourse to force. For my part, I decline to follow either the noble Lord or the right hon. Gentleman into such speculations. I say there is nothing in the speeches of the noble Lord that I have read, as far as I can, at a moment's notice, recollect them, that I am prepared to recede from. But I must point out that it is very irregular for us to be challenged under these circumstances to give an abstract opinion on the most shifting and uncertain proposition that could be submitted to one's judgment. I do not wish in the least to dissever myself from my noble Friend in the action he has taken in this matter; but, as I have been challenged, I will just say this much in addition, that I trust the Arms Act may not in the future have to be put in force in Ulster any more than it has been in the past. It has not been put in force hitherto, because there has been no occasion for it. ["Oh, oh!"] Yes; I appeal to history. The Government of the right hon. Gentleman and other Liberal Governments have not been obliged to apply the provisions of the Arms Acts to Ulster, because the people in those districts are a law-abiding people. I believe it will not be more necessary to put it in force in the future than it has been in the past. Furthermore, I trust that the possible contingencies referred to by my noble Friend will never arise, because I cannot bring myself to believe, and I will not believe until facts establish what now seems to be an absolute impossibility, that the people of England and Scotland will consent to impose on the free and loyal inhabitants of Ulster a yoke which they think will be inconsistent with their liberties, their lives, and the safety of their property. I believe that when an appeal is made to the country the answer of England and Scotland will be that they will stand by their loyal fellow-subjects in Ulster.

Mr. HASLETT (Belfast, W.) said, he would not have trespassed on the time of the House had it not been for observations reflecting on the character of a Body of which he was not ashamed to avow himself a member. He was not aware there was anyting in the principles of Orangeism that any respectable man of the Protestant faith should in any way be ashamed of. Yet they had been charged with crime of the most odious character, though without any proof, save that one hon. Member asserted he had been fired at by Orangemen, but when and where did not transpire, nor where he had made application to have justice done. Upon such bare statement were founded charges against an Association numbering many thousands of respectable, hard-working, and earnest men, whose character would be established by a reference to the records of crimes in Orange districts, which showed how small a proportion of indictable offences were committed by Orangemen. The Society had its origin in murder, it was said. Yes, the murder of Protestants at the Diamond, for whose protection the Society was originally instituted. A large series of extracts had been read setting forth what had been done by Orangemen; but what had been done by Nationalists? The hon. Member who had addressed the House from the Nationalist Benches had stated some time since—

> "What first induced Mr. Gladstone to give attention to the demands of Irishmen? And, as far as could be gathered, it was the outrages committed in the country; and they were, therefore, to understand that the British Parliament was absolutely deaf to argument, and that the best speaking-trumpet to reach its deaf ear was the mouth of a blunderbuss."

What could the people do after hearing that statement from one of their most respected Nationalist Leaders but take up the weapon pointed out to them to get redress for their supposed wrongs? If he did not wish to weary the House he could give quotation after quotation to show the system of loose speaking and outrageous advice to ignorant men which had been indulged in on both sides. He deprecated this in the strongest manner; for while he was not ashamed to own himself an Orangeman, he never uttered a word to counsel the humblest man in society to adopt other than peaceable and law-abiding demeanour, and he never allowed a word to escape from his lips advising the population to have recourse to arms except under circumstances absolutely desperate—in fact, desperate beyond anything he could conceive at present. He owed to his Sovereign loyal obedience to law and order, and he also owed it to his own higher sense of religion that which led him to deal out to his fellow-men all the liberty and all the protection he sought for himself. It had always been the practice in the town of Belfast, at any rate, for licences to carry arms to be granted by the Resident Magistrate. [An hon. Member: No; two local magistrates.] It had been said that Act was not put in force in Down and Antrim, and yet that it had been put in force in other counties. In Kerry and Cork the number of serious crimes reported to the Judge of Assizes at last Assizes was 550; while, at the last Assizes for Down and Antrim, the serious crimes reported were 20 in Antrim and

15 in Down. Looking at these figures, he thought the Government must exercise a very wise discretion as to the places in which they put this Act in force, and the places they did not think it necessary to proclaim at all. The Act was one capable of being made one-sided. It was, he admitted, capable of being made so. It was possible that a magistrate might recommend a party for a licence who was unworthy of confidence, and that under this recommendation, thus improperly given, that party might get the licence. That might be so. He did not, for his own part, know what other magistrates might do, but he (Mr. Haslett) never gave a recommendation to a man that he did not first inquire into his character or his religion. [An hon. MEMBER: Orangeman or not?] He inquired first into the man's character as a citizen, and unless he was satisfied as to his character on these points he did not give him a recommendation. Then, for his own part, he always and under all circumstances refused to give a certificate to a man who was under age or to a man who was of dangerous habits in society. He did not, in deciding whether he should give a recommendation, care at all whether a man was a Roman Catholic or was a Protestant. He did not care for that. If he found that a man was a good citizen, that he was a religious man, that he was a steady man, who was not likely to abuse the possession of arms, he would then give him a certificate; and he had great satisfaction in saying that, to the best of his belief, and according to all the information he had been able to acquire, he had never in a single instance had reason to regret that recommendation he had given a man for a licence to carry arms under this Bill. He would not detain the House by going further with this subject at that hour of the evening. He might, however, say that he intended to vote for the second reading of the Bill. He should take that course, although he thought that some of the provisions it contained might be susceptible of amendment. But, although he was about to take this course, he, for his own part, hoped that the day was not far distant when men of good sense and good bearing in society would not need to be restrained with respect to the possession of arms. He regretted, and he did not hesitate to say so, that decent men in a good position should have such difficulty in getting a licence to carry arms in the counties of Down and Antrim—arms which were never used for committing murder. They generally secured a game licence, and kept their muzzles a little lower or a little higher; but they had never been guilty of murder or shooting. He regretted deeply that in other districts it was not so, and that some parts of Ireland had been brought into disrepute by men—if they were men—by people almost below the dignity of being called men, but who, as a matter of fact, were mere machines excited to these acts by the unguarded expressions of those in whom they unfortunately trusted, and from whom they ought to have received better counsel.

MR. W. O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.) said that they had nothing very particular to quarrel about in the speech of the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, and they would leave him to settle accounts with the hon. Member for South Belfast (Mr. W. Johnston). He should like to ask the hon. Member, however, if he had forgotten that when an ex-Member of that House—a late Lord Mayor of Dublin (Mr. Dawson)—went down to Derry to deliver a lecture on the household franchise, he was fired at by an armed party of Orangemen occupying the City Hall? On that occasion a man's eye was shot out when he was standing within two yards of the Lord Mayor, and shot out, not by a Nationalist, but by one of the armed party who were holding the Corporation Hall, under the command and at the instigation of the noble Lord the Member for North Tyrone (Lord Ernest Hamilton). At the time of the last Election he had to encounter a ferocious Orange mob, who waylaid him and the hon. Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner), who was accompanying him, on leaving the polls. The mob numbered over 200 men. They lined a wall which he had to pass, and every man of them had his hand in his breast pocket, and he well remembered the police running after his car when he approached the mob, and crying out—"Look out, they are going to fire." The police rushed at the mob and collared a lot of the men. His hon. Friend happened to have a revolver which he manifested his perfect readiness to use if the worst came to the worst; and but for this he doubted very much whether he should be there in the House that night to tell the tale. It was all nonsense for Orange Members to pretend to have this virtuous indignation about facts which were as notorious as the daylight. Everybody knew that there was a large number of men at every Orange meeting in the North of Ireland who carried revolvers in their breast pockets, and who used those revolvers just as much as it was safe for them to use them without risking their necks. They generally drew the line at that. Some of his friends who attended the demonstrations at Rosslea and Dromore knew that at those demonstrations, while some were content to cheer the sentiments of the speakers, the Orangemen expressed their applause by rounds of revolver shots. With regard to the Bill before the House, he was sorry that they had had no indication of a desire on the part of the Government to close with the very moderate proposal of his hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). For his own part, he regretted that the Government could not see their way to discard this very hateful coercion system altogether. If the Chief Secretary for Ireland could have consulted his own feelings in the matter, he believed that he would have discarded it. It was really stupid and humiliating to deprive a whole people of firearms. It was just like the forbidden fruit—it only increased the desire. When he was a young fellow the attraction which such a Bill had for him was that a man might get two years' imprisonment if he were discovered breaking its provisions. There was an air of romance or adventure about the thing. If an Irishman had a weapon concealed about him, or under his thatch, he had very much the same sort of romantic and adventurous regard for it as the old Bonapartist in one of Béranger's famous poems had for the tattered old flag which he had under his mattress. The Chief Secretary was right when he said that outrages had not been and would not be prevented by the mere difficulty of obtaining arms. Each man who was disposed to commit an outrage would get arms to do so in spite of all their restrictions. All they did by such legislation was to wound the self-respect and manhood of the people and to deprive them of a right which other people in the world enjoyed. Its effect also was to disarm five-sixths of the Irish people and to arm one-sixth, and that was the reason why his hon. Friends were pressing the Government, if there was to be a disarmament, to make it a real and not a sham and one-sided one. He reminded the Government, however, that the damage which it was sought to repair by this Bill had, to a large extent, been already done. Arms were already in the hands of the rowdies of the country; and unless some measures were taken to revoke the licences of those persons they would continue to be armed to the teeth, being perfectly persuaded that they could commit any outrages with impunity, so far as the magistrates were concerned, and, indeed, so far, he was sorry to say, as the superior police officers in the North were concerned. The class of dependents and ne'er-do-wells who were possessed of revolvers had a conviction that even if they got into trouble with the police through riots they would be brought before a Bench of magistrates who were sworn Orangemen, and before men who were making speeches inciting them to the use of firearms. All that they asked was that the Government should not make this legislation one-sided in its character. The Nationalists wanted nothing but peace, and they approached the question in this spirit. He hoped that the Government would give some intimation that they considered that the request of the hon. Member for Cork was not an unreasonable one.

Lord ERNEST HAMILTON (Tyrone, N.) said, he desired to make a few remarks on the last speaker's allusion to Derry. It was true when Mr. Dawson, a late Lord Mayor of Dublin, went to Derry for the purpose of sowing the seed of sedition, a purpose in which he was thankful to say he failed, he did not meet with the cordial reception which he expected. It was also true that revolver shots were fired, and a man's eye put out; but those shots were not fired by Orangemen, and therefore the statement which had been made was absolutely without foundation. There were, no doubt, Orange and Nationalist processions; and he was sorry to say that he was foolish enough to take part in an Orange procession. As it passed down the street he saw a man at a window fire a revolver at the procession. He left the House, therefore, to judge whether it was likely that an Orangeman would fire a revolver at his own procession. There was one significant fact in connection with these proceedings to which he should like to draw attention. An inquiry was instituted in Derry to ascertain the cause of the shots being fired. This inquiry lasted three days. The police and the Loyalists came up in large numbers to give evidence. He himself gave evidence; but from the beginning to the end of the inquiry not a single Nationalist was forthcoming. He left the House to judge of the facts as he had stated them.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.) said, there was good reason why no Nationalists appeared to give evidence before the Commission of Inquiry at Derry. It was because the investigation was ordered by the authorities of Dublin Castle. The Nationalists declared that they had no confidence whatever in the persons holding the inquiry, especially when the Government refused to give power to administer an oath which was demanded by the Nationalist Party. It was only an unsworn inquiry, composed of what the Nationalists considered to be gross partizans. Personally, he was strongly opposed to this Bill. As an Irish Nationalist Member he would never leave it on record, to be hurled as a reproach against him, that he concurred in, and voted for, a Bill to deprive his countrymen of the first right of all free men, the right to carry arms if they thought fit. He disbelieved in the efficacy of the Bill; and, though he admitted the opposition of the Irish Party to-day was different from that of the past, yet he thought he was justified in saying that he had no faith in Coercion Bills of any kind for the people of Ireland. He believed that the Chief Secretary (Mr. John Morley) was the first Minister holding Office who had made the declaration that for the purposes of crime, outrage, and assassination, Arms Acts were simply valueless in Ireland. The Irish Members had told the House the same thing for a long time; and the long experience they had obtained from the administration of 15 or 20 Arms Acts which had been passed and enforced in Ireland in almost unbroken continuity since the Union might have proved this fact to the House. At a time when Ireland was convulsed by outrages—from 1825 to 1835—Arms Acts of the most stringent kind were enforced; but they did not prevent the commission of agrarian crime. The man who wished to revenge himself for what he considered to be a wrong, or to commit any crime with firearms, would obtain those arms despite all their police detectives and Arms Acts. The only argument which could be used as a justification for this legislation was the preventing of men going about the country in open day and under the eyes of the police with arms in their hands. He had attended probably no less than 150 public meetings in Ireland, and he asked those who had watched the course of public meetings in Ireland, especially in the three Southern Provinces, if the people had been seen at those assemblies with firearms in their hands? At no National League meeting which he had attended, large and tumultuous as they were, had the police had occasion to take arms out of the hands of the people gathered there. But in the Northern Province, the so-called Loyalist Province, this particular offence was to be found there. In Ulster the Orangemen had continually come to meetings called for free discussion with arms in their hands, a proceeding which would not be tolerated in England. In the three Southern Provinces, where no such offence was committed, the Arms Act was enforced with the utmost rigour, whereas in Ulster, where it had been constantly violated, the Arms Act was not in force at all. As to the threats of civil war, he did not believe in the threats of the Orangemen. If a wall were drawn round Ulster to-morrow the Nationalists would be a good match for the Orangemen. He did not believe in these threats for another reason, and that was because the Orangemen who talked thus were but a very small minority of the Protestants of Ulster. If the Bill were passed at all, it should be made applicable to the whole country. He had been hunted by 200 men with arms in their hands through the streets of a town in the County Down, until he escaped by means of the Royal Irish Constabulary. He would vote against an Arms Act; but if the Government were determined to pass one, then let it be a real Arms Act—an Act to disarm every man in Ireland, not only the peasant, but the gentlemen; until they learned to talk and act like sensible men —so long as it might be necessary.

Mr. DE COBAIN (Belfast, E.) said, he asked the indulgence of the House while he made some observations with regard to the Orange Institution, which had been seriously impeached by hon. Gentlemen sitting below the Gangway. The statements made by hon. Gentlemen in regard to the Orange Institution were of the most reckless and untruthful character. He had the honour of being the Grand Master of the Orange Institution of Belfast for a period of five years, and he had the honour at present of being Deputy Grand Master of the Orange Institution for Ireland. He had presided at meetings of the Orange Body, the largest meetings that had ever been held in Ireland, some of them attended by over 100,000 people. [*Laughter from the Home Rulers.*] Yes; attended by over 100,000 people, and he had never yet been present at an Orange meeting, or had taken part in an Orange procession, where the Orangemen were armed. He had never yet taken part in an armed Orange meeting, nor had he known members of the Orange Body march in procession when armed, and therefore he denied most emphatically the statements that had been made by hon. Members below the Gangway. A short time ago the hon. and learned Member for South Londonderry (Mr. T. M. Healy) interspersed some observations in the midst of a grave debate in relation to Imperial matters about "sweethearts," and the hon. and learned Member appeared to assume that, as the word was used on the platforms of Orange meetings, it was figurative in its character, and amounted to an instruction to the men assembled to come armed. The statement was purely visionary. In some parts of Ireland, where Protestants were in a minority, and being in a minority were exposed to outrage, it was necessary for the Protestants to arm themselves; it was necessary for the Protestants attending public meetings for loyal purposes, meetings at which the name of the Queen of these Realms was received with respect, and at which attachment to Imperial rule was expressed in no indefinite way, it was necessary for the Protestants in districts thickly populated with their opponents to carry arms for their own protection. It was not only once in the history of Ulster that a Sunday school going out in the summer weather for a holiday excursion had been attacked by men differing from them in religion with weapons and firearms—["Where, where?"]—and for these reasons, where Protestants were in a minority, he admitted that Protestants might carry arms. ["Where, where?"]

Mr. SPEAKER said, he hoped hon. Gentlemen would allow the hon. Member to proceed uninterruptedly with his speech.

Mr. DE COBAIN said, he was much obliged to the Speaker for his intervention. He had often noticed that the surveillance which the Speaker exercised in the Chair was largely hampered by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, and that, therefore, many hon. Members had to claim the Chair's protection from interruption. What he was about to observe was that where the Protestants were numerous—in Belfast and in those parts of Ulster which had been assailed by hon. Members below the Gangway—when Loyalists met together they did not do so armed. It was not necessary that they should. During the time he was Grand Master of Belfast, certain disturbances occurred in the town, which were referred to by the London papers as "Orange riots." Being then at the head of the Orange Institution in Belfast, he felt himself charged with a very weighty responsibility, and he felt it was his duty to inquire how far actual members of the Orange Institution had in any sense participated in the riots. During the lengthened investigation that occurred in the Police Court consequent upon these riots, there were just two instances in which actual members of the Orange Institution were impeached. In one of these instances a man who had mixed in the crowd did so for the purpose of rescuing an aged Roman Catholic woman who had been exposed to molestation; and in the other instance a man's house was entered by the police without a warrant, and he considered himself justified in resisting the encroachment. Hence his being brought before the authorities. These were the only two instances in the lengthened police investigation consequent upon the riots at Belfast in which members of the Orange Body were impeached. The debate this evening had drifted into so many subjects that it was very difficult to follow them all. The right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister appeared to consider that it was relevant to a discussion upon the renewal of the Arms Act to comment upon some political observations of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill). If the right hon. Gentleman had only been in the House when the noble Lord justified his observations, and quoted his true precedents to warrant the use of those observations, it was possible the right hon. Gentleman would not have made the attack. At all events, the noble Lord was well able to defend himself against the attacks of the Prime Minister. An observation was made with regard to the investigations at Derry consequent upon the visit of Mr. O'Connor and the riots that ensued. An hon. Gentleman below the Gangway said the Nationalists did not appear to give evidence out of contempt for the authority by which that investigation was set on foot. But that authority was the present Prime Minister. The right hon. Gentleman was then in Office as he was now.

Mr. DILLON: What I stated was that the Nationalists refused to give evidence because it was not a sworn inquiry, and because we had no confidence in its impartiality.

Mr. DE COBAIN: Whatever the cause might have been, reference was made to the Executive, and that Executive was precisely similar to the present one, only he thought they had at that time a Chief Secretary who had a more general respect for the whole population of Ireland than the present holder of the Office. They had then to deal with Gentlemen who had not undergone a process of conversion, and who were animated by a spirit of confidence in the Protestant population. So far as the renewal of the Arms Act was concerned, he had no objection to the partial enforcement of the provisions of that Act. With regard to an observation, which appeared to him to be very irrelevant to the discussion before the House, as to what the Chief Secretary called "contingent sedition," and the attitude the loyal Irish population might adopt if the Bill of the Prime Minister became law, it was not for him (Mr. De Cobain) to say. He thought there was not the slightest probability of that Bill becoming law, and until its prospects assumed a different aspect from what they were at present, they would give no indication of the attitude that would be adopted; but when the time came the Loyalists would be able to protect their own interests and to defend their imperilled liberties and lives. (*Ironical Irish cheers.*) He was much obliged for those cheers. [An Irish Member: Do not mention it.] It did not at all discompose him. What he was going to say was that no matter what policy might be adopted by that House, or any House of Commons, the Loyalists of Ireland would always be animated by a spirit of devoted and loyal submission to the reigning Monarch of these Realms.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) said, the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, being the Grand Master of an Orange Lodge, had indulged in a vein of lofty eloquence more befitting the "'prentice boys of Derry" than the arena of the House of Commons, and had sought to depict the Orange Societies as all that was pure and immaculate, and the Nationalists as all that was demoniacal and odious. The Prime Minister had borne up very well until that night; but after that dreadful and impressive pronouncement of the "Grand Master" of the Orange Lodge, no doubt the right hon. Gentleman would fall down defeated and abashed. The Representatives of the Ulster Orangemen always tried to make Englishmen and Scotchmen believe that "Orangeism" and "Protestantism" were absolutely synonymous terms in Ulster, and were really one and the same institution. Nothing more absurd, ridiculous, or untrue, and more grossly misleading could be imagined. There was as much difference between the honest and straightforward Protestantism of Ulster and rowdy corner-boy Orangeism as there was between the two sides of that House. It was ridiculous to say, as had been said, that the Orangemen had no arms. At Dromore the Orangemen assembled at the rate of 7*s*. 6*d*. a-day, and the late Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. Trevelyan) stated that sackfuls of revolvers were taken from them. Was it not, therefore, indecent, dishonest, and hypocritical for an hon. Member to sneer down, and with smooth-faced coolness——

Mr. SPEAKER: The words "dishonest and hypocritical" are not in Order as applied to an hon. Member.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I will withdraw the words "dishonest and hypocritical;" but at least it was indecent —very indecent—for an hon. Member to come down and tell the House that the Orangemen did not carry arms. None of the Nationalists wished to see Protestants any more than Catholics deprived of the proper use of arms; but they asked that if an Arms Act was passed it should be employed to prevent the reckless members of Orange Lodges from coming into the possession of revolvers. The last speaker said he had never known an Orange procession that was armed, and he had likened those demonstrations to the processions of school children; but how then came it that when the noble Lord the late Conservative Leader in that House went to Belfast and led the way to the subsequent mission of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) he told an Orange gathering that he addressed there to be sure not to fire off their rifles in the gaiety of their hearts. The noble Lord, knowing how undesirable and dangerous violence of any kind would be, advised the Ulster Orangemen, in a spirit very different from that of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington, not to fire off their rifles. He would ask, if the Bill were again passed, that it should be administered fairly. The result of its recent adminstration, which was anything but fair, was that the Ulster Orangemen were the only people in Ireland who had arms; and it was only because of the disadvantage under which they were thereby placed that the Irish Members were willing that such a Bill should become law. Another point to which he wished to refer was to the circumstance that the administration of the Act was manifestly opposed to justice. This resulted from having sworn Orangemen acting as magistates. In the county he represented there could be but little confidence in the administration of justice with a Bench constituted as it was. His opponent at his election was a magistrate, and just after the election that magistrate appeared before the people with a bright yellow sash, and was greeted by the crowd of his followers as the latest recruit to the great Orange Society. How, he asked, could confidence be felt in magistrates of that character? He (Mr. Redmond) represented a very large number indeed of Protestants, and he believed that not one of them would deliberately or in any way do an injury or an injustice to his Catholic brethren. The Government would find themselves in this difficulty —that, whereas other Arms Acts had been passed to prevent the Irish people from procuring arms, this was an Act to disarm them. If the Government intended to carry out the Act fairly, they most revoke the licences already issued, and they would have to set the police to work to seize the arms of every Irishman. He objected to a measure that would disarm one section of the Irish people, and would leave arms in the possession of their opponents.

Mr. HENRY CAMPBELL (Fermanagh, S.), as representing the Southern Division of Fermanagh, so often referred to by hon. Members above the Gangway as loyal and patriotic, wished to lay his protest against an Arms Act of any description, were it not that contingencies had arisen, and might arise rendering an Arms Act necessary. He was aware that in Enniskillen revolvers had been delivered at the rate of 150 per week, and for what purpose? Was it for the purpose of taking the field? Certainly not. No; but it was for the purpose of creating riots at the coming Election. The Catholics and the Nationalists of the County Fermanagh, who were represented in that House by two hon. Members, and were very numerous, had not yet two Catholic magistrates on the Bench. How then was it possible for the Catholic farmers who desired to obtain a gun to frighten the rooks off their farms, to hope to do so, seeing that the whole of the magistrates were Orangemen and sworn partizans? He urged the Government, if they desired to pass an Arms Bill, to bring in a measure which would be enforced against all parties alike, and not a Bill such as this one, which would only be enforced in regard to one particular section of the community.

Mr. EDWARD CLARKE (Plymouth) said, he regretted that this discussion upon the renewal of the Arms Act should have degenerated into a quarrel between the Orange and Green. A division on this question now appeared inevitable, and if it took place he would vote with the Government for the re-enactment of the Bill; but he would do so with great reluctance and regret. In 1881 he voted for the Coercion Bills of the Prime Minister, and he did so under the conviction that the Government of that day might be trusted only to ask for coercion when its powers were necessary for immediate use. That belief was disappointed. The Ministry used its powers of coercion in 1881, not for the purpose of restoring order, but of forwarding a political action in this House; and he then felt and said publicly that he believed he should never again be able to support any measure of coercion proposed by a Government similarly constituted; and in 1882, when a very strong Coercion Act was brought in, he steadily declined to vote in favour of any one of its provisions. If at this time he voted for the present Arms Act it was not with any view of its being exceptional with regard to Ireland, or of its being put into exceptional operation in one part of that country. As far as the Arms Act itself was concerned, he thought it would be a useful thing if in this country we had an Arms Act, and if we had some check upon the carrying and improper possession of arms. He, for one, would never vote for this Bill for Ireland if it were not to be equally enforced in regard to all parts of Ireland. The proposal thrown out by more than one hon. Member that evening for the disarmament of the whole of Ireland was a very serious proposal. It was one very different from carrying into effect the provisions of this Act; but, so far as this Act had to be put into force by the authorities responsible for the protection of law and order, he hoped they would put it in force with perfect equality, and they would restrict, with regard to the possession of arms, people in one part of Ireland just as much as in another. He hoped never again to vote for a measure of this kind applicable to Ireland which could not be equally applied to the country in which he lived. He was afraid the necessity for it in Ireland was deeper than even the Chief Secretary himself would be willing to admit. Things had been said that had increased the dangers against which the Arms Act was intended to provide. Whatever those dangers, it was only the assurance of the responsible Government of the Crown that this Act was necessary for the purpose of preserving order that he, as an English Member, would give his vote for the second reading.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) said, he should not have interposed in the debate if it had not been for the remarks that had been made by the hon. Member for North Fermanagh (Mr. William Redmond). He did not think the statements of the hon. Member should go uncontradicted, and he felt that he could not sit silently by when he heard such atrocious actions attributed to the Orangemen by the hon. Member. At no time in their history was it a pledge on the part of Orangemen to "wade knee-deep in Catholic blood." That was a calumny which had been refuted time after time by Gentlemen who were Members of that House, and their words, as Christians and gentlemen, ought to be taken. He contradicted most emphatically that statement. The basis of the Orange Society was a union of Protestants for maintaining the Legislative Connection between Ireland and Great Britain, and the Succession to the Throne of Her Majesty's most illustrious House being Protestant. It was part of the principles of the Orange Society to injure no man on account of his religious opinions, and no persecuting spirit of any kind against persons on account of their religion was tolerated in their Lodges. The documents of the Orange Society were open to the Chief Secretary and to the House. Their Organization was not secret. In Ireland, the Society was not regulated by an oath; and they met as a Body to maintain the integrity of the Empire, the Legislative Union, and the honour of the Crown. This the Orange Institution intended to do, and 500,000 Orangemen were bound to use every means to do so. In the ranks of the Orangemen not all the Protestants of Ulster were to be found; but if the views of hon. Members below the Gangway were carried out, every Protestant in Ulster would find himself compelled to join himself to the Orange Institution.

MR. T. D. SULLIVAN (Dublin, College Green): Sir, we have had many Arms Acts in Ireland during the last 86 years; and an undeniable proof that they have not been satisfactorily worked is to be found in the fact that, while the Orangemen of Ulster are armed in one way or another almost to a man, the Catholics of Ireland are certainly unarmed. I should be very much surprised if the Orangemen of the North of Ireland deny that statement of a plain fact, because it has been with them a matter of continual boast that they have arms, and that they know how to use them. Now, Sir, it is because they are armed, and because their Catholic neighbours are unarmed, that we have had from time to time in the North of Ireland so much Party rioting and so much bloodshed. In the South, where Protestants and Orangemen are comparatively few and the Catholics form a great majority, Party riots and bloodshed are things which have been absolutely unknown. The recent meetings in the North of Ireland were attended by armed Orangemen; but the Nationalists went unarmed to their demonstrations until matters had progressed a very long way. We have the testimony of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan) to that fact. The right hon. Gentleman stated last year in this House that it was not the habit or the custom of the Nationalists in the North of Ireland to go to political meetings armed until they found, over and over again, that the Orangemen, who were holding counter-demonstrations, attended them armed almost to a man. It will be remembered by some hon. Members that one of the statements made by the right hon. Gentleman was that at one of these meetings, in regard to which the Government thought proper to take action, the Orangemen, arriving at the railway station from distant parts, were stopped by the authorities, and sacks full of revolvers were taken from them. The Orangemen boast, at the present day, of the magnificent fusillade they fired at Rosslea and Dromore. I had the pleasure of hearing part of that fusillade myself. I am quite prepared to grant that there are others besides these violent Orangemen who are possessed of arms, although I believe that there could not have been found among the Catholic Party one revolver for every five carried by the Orangemen. It has been remarked by my hon. Colleague that these revolvers are of no use for military warfare, but only for purposes of rioting. They are worthless as against the arms of the Constabulary or the military; but they are very effective weapons in a riot or disturbance, because they can easily be concealed; and it is the man who knows that he has this weapon in his pocket who is always ready to give offence and to create riot and disturbance. The Orangemen have two reasons for taking that course—one is that they think it very likely that they will get the best in the conflict, being better armed than their opponents; and the other is that they know that, if any legal trouble comes out of their performance, they will by-and-bye have sympathetic juries and sympathetic magistrates trying their case. This is not at all a new condition of things; it is a matter which has been inquired into by the House of Commons more than once. These Orange troubles and these armed demonstrations are not a matter of to-day or yesterday. I have here two volumes of Reports from a Committee of this House which sat on this subject in 1835; and if any hon. Member wishes to learn something about the peaceable character and love of law and order which distinguish the Orange Party, I would refer him to these volumes. We have just heard from the hon. Member for East Belfast (Mr. De Cobain) that the Orange Society, if it is distinguished for anything at all, is noted for the love it has for loyalty to the Crown, and the cause of law and order. Now, there was a time in the county of Armagh when these gentlemen had matters very much their own way, and let us see to what extent the description given by the hon. Member of that Society is borne out by the record of their doings in the county of Armagh at that time. On the 28th of December, 1795, certain magistrates and gentlemen were convened in Armagh at the special instance of Viscount Gosford, the Governor of the county. The noble Viscount opened the business of the Convention by delivering an address, from which I will only read a very small extract; but what I shall read is a fair sample of the entire document. Viscount Gosford was a Protestant Nobleman who lived in days of unchecked Protestant ascendancy in Ireland, and who had more than once declared that he loved that ascendancy and would stand by it to the last gasp. Still, he was a man with some sense of humanity, of honour, and of justice in his composition, and the state of things in that county had become so frightful that he considered it his bounden duty to call the magistrates together in order that he might speak to them of the horrible state of affairs which then existed. In his address on that occasion, Viscount Gosford said—

"Gentlemen, having requested your attendance here to-day, it becomes my duty to state the grounds upon which I have thought it advisable to propose this meeting, and, at the same time, to submit to your consideration a plan which occurs to me as the one most likely to check the enormities which have already disgraced this county, and may soon reduce it to the greatest distress. It is no secret that a persecution, accompanied with all the circumstances of ferocious cruelty which have in all ages distinguished that dreadful calamity, is now raging in this county. Neither age nor even acknowledged innocence in regard to the late disturbances is sufficient to excite mercy, much less to afford protection. The only crime which the wretched objects of this merciless persecution are charged with is a crime easy of proof; it is simply a profession of the Roman Catholic Faith. A lawless banditti"—

that is the name which Viscount Gosford, a Protestant Nobleman, gave to this law-abiding Orange Society—

"A lawless banditti have constituted themselves the judges of this species of delinquency, and the sentence they pronounce is equally concise and terrible. It is nothing less than the confiscation of all property, with immediate banishment. It would be extremely painful and surely unnecessary to detail the horrors that attend the execution of so wide and tremendous a proscription, that it certainly exceeds in the comparative number of those it consigns to ruin and misery every example that ancient or modern history can afford."

As I have told the House, that is a sample only of the address of Viscount Gosford in reference to the doings of the Orange Society in the county of Armagh. Nevertheless, it is perfectly true, as the hon. Member for East Belfast (Mr. De Cobain) just told us, that if you will only let the Orangemen paint to you their own portraits, you will find them a charming class of people. Sweetness and light, and everything that is amiable and lovable in human nature, are to be found concentrated in an extraordinary degree in the Orange Lodges of the North of Ireland. The principles and practice of the Society, as I have just shown, and could show further by numerous references to historical examples, conflict very much with that view. I should like to read to the House the qualifications—the admirable and delightful qualifications—which are set down for members of the Orange Society. I take them from the volume I have already quoted. In the first place—

"Every Orange member must have a sincere love and veneration for his Almighty Maker; a firm and undying faith in the Saviour of the world; a full conviction that He is the only Mediator between a sinful creature and an offended Creator."

Now, under the circumstances of the case, I must confess that that language seems to me something very like blasphemy. The next qualification is—

"That he shall be a man of humane and compassionate disposition."

These are the men who compose the "lawless banditti" referred to by Viscount Gosford as having been engaged in carrying out in the county of Armagh and elsewhere these tremendous and cruel persecutions. They were all of them to be men of humane and compassionate disposition. Further, they are to be

"Of a courteous and affable behaviour; utter enemies to savage brutality and un-Christian cruelty."

And, moreover, they are to be

"Lovers of society, and of improving company."

Finally, they are to have

"A great regard for temperance and sobriety."

We all know that these are qualities which eminently distinguish the Orangemen in the North. As to their feeling of loyalty, and their love for law and order, let me read, for the edification of the House, another passage from this volume, which recites some of the obligations that the Orangeman is required to undertake. One of them is that he is

"To keep his brethren's secret as his own, unless in the case of murder, treason, and perjury."

Thus, every other offence in the whole category of human crime is exempt from this condition. He is

"To keep his brother's secret in everything except murder, treason, and perjury."

But, very wisely for their own purposes, the Orangemen have left out the crime of arson, probably because house-burning was one of their favourite occupations. Even within the last few years a distinguished member of that Society was sent to prison, and I believe is there still, for endeavouring to set fire to a

Land League hut in the North of Ireland. Arson, it seems, runs in the blood, and the old habits have not yet been extirpated from the members of this Society. It must also be noticed that robbery, rape, and other crimes too numerous to mention are omitted, and a free tongue only is given in cases of murder, treason, and perjury. I think I shall be able to tell the House something more of this loyalty. Judge Fletcher—a Protestant Judge, of course, for in those days there could be no Catholic Judge—in his Charge to the Grand Jury in the county of Wexford, in 1815, spoke of the loyalty of these Orange gentlemen. He said—

> "'I am a loyal man,' says a witness; that is, 'gentlemen of the petty jury, believe me, let me swear what I will.' When he swears he is a loyal man, he means, 'Gentlemen of the jury, forget your oaths and acquit the Orangeman. . . . . The truly loyal man is peaceful and quiet, he does his utmost to prevent commotion. . . . But what says the loyal man of another description, the mere pretender to loyalty? 'I am a loyal man in times of tranquillity; I am attached to the present order of things, as far as I can get any good by it.'"

That is the limit of the loyalty of the gentlemen of the present day. For what do they tell us? What do they avow in this House, and out of it? They say that if a law be passed which is displeasing to them—if a law be passed by the Queen, Lords and Commons of this Kingdom from the operation of which they apprehend the slightest discomfort, then they will feel themselves entitled to set it at defiance, and resist it, if necessary, with arms in their hands. That is the measure of the loyalty of these gentlemen. They call themselves the Loyal minority, but I call them the Disloyal minority. Allow me to proceed with the quotation from Judge Fletcher's Charge to the Grand Jury. He went on to say—

> "'I am attached to the present order of things as far as I can get any good by it. I malign every man of a different opinion from those whom I serve. I bring my loyalty into the market.' Such are the pretenders to loyalty, many of whom I have seen, and incalculable mischief they perpetrate. It is not to their interest that the country should be peaceable. Their loyalty is a sea of troubled waters."

That is a correct picture of the loyal Orangeman, not drawn by an Irish Nationalist or Papist, but by a Irish Protestant Judge of the land. It is an old custom of the Orangemen to bring arms with them to their meetings, even when it is not a counter-demonstration at all, but a meeting of their own. It has been customary for them to engage on the 12th of July in a sham battle of the Boyne. They divide themselves into two parties, one representing the Williamite Army, and the other the Jacobite Army. I need not tell you that the Jacobites always get the worst of it. An Orangeman mounted a tremendous charger, represents King William, while another, striding a much less dignified steed, represents King James, who invariably comes to grief. I find, in this record, a curious incident mentioned as having occurred at one of these sham fights in the county of Tyrone. The rival parties of Orangemen got so eager and warm, that they conceived they were real enemies, and one of them fired at King James as he was jumping over a ditch, and blew out his eye. Now, Sir, what do these people want with arms at all? They are about the most comic set of people we have in Ireland, and I can assure the House we have some very queer people there. But for the fact that the comedy sometimes becomes a tragedy, it would be a very laughable matter indeed. We pity these men and we do not despair of them. They have been made what they are by a long course of very special and peculiar treatment extended to them by the Parliament and the Government of England. They have been kept apart from the masses of their fellow-countrymen; they have been taught to mistrust them; they have been put over their heads, and have obtained power, place, privilege, and everything that the Government could give to them. Of course, to that order of things, they have been, in a certain sense of the word, loyal. But the moment that order of things is attempted to be interfered with, their loyalty goes to the wind, and is substituted by threats and protestations. That is no new thing. No single reform was ever passed in Ireland for the benefit of the people at large, from the date of the Union, that has not been denounced by these men and threatened to be resisted. Take the case of Catholic Emancipation. That was to have ruined Ireland and England also, and to have broken up the Empire. Municipal Reform was regarded as another tremendous evil. I need not go through the list of similar measures which were looked upon in the same light, because every reform which has tended to secure equal justice, equal rights, and equal privileges in Ireland was denounced by these men, who, in their opposition to it, threatened the most fearful things that could be imagined. But, notwithstanding all that, we do not despair of them; we have no enmity towards them. We do not like the insults and outrages they perpetrate; but for the men themselves we wish them well, and we do hope that a time will come when, although they may continue Orangemen if they choose, they will, at the same time, be Irishmen. They are nothing of the sort today. They have no country—they are not Englishmen, and in heart and spirit they are not Irishmen. They are the enemies of their native land. I do not imagine that that order of things is to continue for ever; and I think the effect of such a measure as that which has been brought before the House of Commons by the Prime Minister will, in the course of some reasonable time, allay their apprehensions, and draw the sting of that hatred which causes them to say and do so many foolish things, and by-and-bye they will settle down as members of the Irish nation, and become a useful and prosperous community.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): At this hour of the evening I propose to be very brief in the remarks which I intend to make. My apology for intruding myself upon the House is that I have had some little personal experience of these Orange Gentlemen, who have spent a considerable portion of the evening in repudiating actions which every sensible Orangeman and every sensible Protestant know to have occurred. I can tell the House, from my own personal experience, dating from a very early age, that the words and actions of the Orange leaders have always tended to set class against class. The Orangemen have done everything in their power to promote the ascendancy of their religion, and to set up in Ireland a standard of hatred between man and his fellow-man. I well recollect, in my earlier days, having been requested to become a member of this Orange Society. I asked the friend who desired to nominate me as a member of that distinguished Order what I was supposed to do. The answer was that I was to do everything in my power against the Roman Catholic religion; that I was to vote against the Catholics; that I was to prevent the Catholics from getting place or power; and that I was to oppose them by every means at my command. I would ask hon. Members in this House if men with principles like these are proper persons to intrust with the care of arms? I have been astonished and amazed this evening at the expressions which have fallen from hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway. They have told us that these men are meek, mild, gentle sucking-doves. Let me give my own personal experience. During the last Election I paid a visit to the North of Ireland, and before I went there I met a few of my friends in the City of Cork who belong to an Orange Lodge. They told me—"It is all very well to mix among Orangemen in Cork; but in order to find out what that Society really is you must wait until you reach the North, from which, in all probability, you will never come back alive." I never believed that there was any truth in those statements; but when I went to the North of Ireland I found that there was much more reality in them than I had conceived. I recollect the day when my hon. Friend the Member for South Tyrone (Mr. W. O'Brien) drove to one of the small towns in that division of the county, where he met with a somewhat hostile reception. We were warned by the police officers that our lives would be sacrificed if we left the town that day. The police were drawn up in the square facing the hotel at which we were stopping, and there were a large number of Orangemen outside the hotel brandishing their revolvers in our faces. I will defy hon. Members to deny that, because I saw it myself. When we came down through the streets of the town, we were pelted with stones over the bayonets of the police, and when we reached the bridge leading out of the town, we found men gathered there armed with revolvers. The police told us to draw up, which we did; and I firmly believe that if we had not had the protection of the police that day, we should not have come out of that town alive. That is not all. I recollect the morning which preceded the day of polling. I was in the town of Dungannon, and I recollect going down to a little shop which faced a gunsmith's shop. I saw a constant stream of men coming out of that shop handling small revolvers—"sweethearts," I think, they are called—which they had been obtaining for the purpose, I suppose, of preserving law and order. I would ask the House if that state of things ought to continue? For what purpose were these men getting revolvers? Was it not for the purpose of intimidation and interference with free election? Would such a state of affairs be tolerated in the South of Ireland? If it had occurred there, hon. Gentleman above the Gangway would have made a great to do about it; but because it was done at the instigation of Deputy Lieutenants, of magistrates I could name, and of Deputy Grand Masters of Orange Lodges I could name also, if I chose, these men were protected against that law which would surely have overtaken them if the acts had been perpetrated by any of the people of the South of Ireland. Let me give one further instance of their method of carrying on free election, aided by revolvers, in the North of Ireland. On another day I happened to go out with my hon. Friend the Member for East Tyrone (Mr. Reynolds) to Stewartstown, in the Northern part of the district which he represents, and, while we were on the point of addressing the Nationalist electors, a man stepped out from the Orange ranks and drew a revolver, which he levelled at several persons. The name of that man was John Dunseath, and I have already drawn the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the circumstance. When the man presented his revolver, seeing that danger was imminent and that injury might possibly ensue, I jumped down, when this heroic Orangeman immediately ran away, and, I believe, took refuge under a bed in a neighbouring house, from which dignified position he was extracted by the heels by a constable. This man was brought before the magistrates who had granted him the licence to carry arms; and what was their action? They stated that the man had presented, not a revolver, but a pipe-case. A pipe-case, Sir! It was presented at me at no greater distance than the Table on the floor of this House, and I was able to see quite clearly what it was. The circumstance was sworn to and distinctly proved by three other witnesses. But what did the unpaid magistrate say on that occasion? He said that, at any rate, whether it was a revolver or a pipe-case, it had had the desired effect of frightening the people. That is what is considered to be the right of free election in the North of Ireland. If these revolvers are being obtained in great quantities at the present moment, will not the right of free election be endangered at any ensuing Election? I maintain that it is really wrong to allow these men to have and obtain, at the instigation of the magistrates, arms which will interfere with all the circumstances that go towards building up a free election and obtaining the true verdict and opinion of the people.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I am aware, Sir, that I have no right of reply; but, with the indulgence of the House, I may perhaps be allowed to make one or two extremely brief remarks on some of the points which have been raised in the course of this debate. The suggestion of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) was that we should take powers to revoke licences; not merely such as we have now in the hands of the Lord Lieutenant, but that we should give those powers of revocation to the authorities who now have the power of granting licences. That is an administrative question which I should like to have further time to consider before deciding whether the Licensing Authorities are authorities to whom the power of revocation might properly be confided. Before coming to any decision on the point, I should like to have time to confer with some of my Colleagues in Dublin. Another point raised, I think, by the hon. Member for the City of Cork—or, if not by him, by some other speaker in that quarter of the House—was as to extending the operation of the Act to the two counties where at present it does not run. That change, of course, needs no legislative action on the part of Parliament, because the Lord Lieutenant has nothing to do but to use the powers already conferred on him and to proclaim those districts which at the present moment are not included. Whether the Lord Lieutenant will think fit to use those powers to proclaim the districts which are now exempt is a question we have under our very careful consideration. More than that I cannot at present undertake to say. The hon. and learned Member for South Derry (Mr. T. M. Healy) put a question as to the regulations affecting the importation at the ports. The state of things as regards the importation of arms and ammunition is that there are 12 specified ports by which alone it can be effected—namely, Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Limerick, Londonderry, Waterford, Galway, Sligo, Dundalk, Wexford, Drogheda, and Greenore. The importation takes place under regulations which are specified in the Order passed and issued by the Lord Lieutenant in Council. As to the general point raised by the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth (Mr. E. Clarke) and others in regard to an assurance being given by the Government that it is our design and purpose to administer this Act, if it is passed, with impartiality, and to use its powers with discrimination as between one set of Irishmen and another—Orangemen and Catholics — I should have thought it hardly necessary for me to give an assurance of that kind. However, as I have been asked, and as it has been made a sort of condition of approval of our measure, I have no hesitation in repeating what I intended to say at an earlier period this evening—that it is our intention to continue the very careful inquiries we have already instituted as to the carrying and possession of arms in an illegal manner, and to apply and exercise the powers we are now asking Parliament again to confer in an entirely impartial spirit.

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I certainly have no wish whatever, Sir, to cast any doubt on the concluding words of the right hon. Gentleman. I cannot believe for a moment that he, or any right hon. Gentleman who may be intrusted with the Government of Ireland, would wish to administer such an Act as this, except in the most complete spirit of justice as between the different classes and sections of society in Ireland. And, Sir, in supporting the second reading of this Bill, I do so with the most complete belief that the right hon. Gentleman—should it be his fate to administer the measure now proposed, if it should become an Act—will carry out the words he has addressed to the House. With regard to the Amendment suggested by the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) as to the power of revocation of licences when granted, my recollection is this. I think in former Bills of the kind it was always considered that the act of revocation was a more serious matter than the act of granting a licence, and that the power of revocation should be retained in the hands of the Central Authority, in order that there should be a greater difficulty in the way of revocation than in granting the licences. In fact, it was desired that these licences should be granted as far as possible, and should not be revoked, unless it was shown to the satisfaction of the Chief Secretary, or of the Lord Lieutenant, that there were special circumstances existing which rendered such revocation absolutely necessary. I do not wish to dwell upon that matter, because it is a point which it will be more fitting to discuss in Committee. Certainly, if the right hon. Gentleman thinks it right to extend the powers of revocation, there may be some reasons why such powers should be extended; but I do not wish at present to express any opinion on the subject. There is, however, one point which occurs to me, having listened to a great part of this debate, to which I should wish to call attention, and it is this. Sir, this is a Bill of exceptional character, applying to Ireland certain regulations as to the possession and use of arms which it is not thought necessary to apply to other parts of the United Kingdom. It is remarkable that at the very moment when we are asked to give Ireland exceptional powers of local self-government, such as the Government do not propose to apply to any other part of the United Kingdom, we should be simultaneously asked to continue such an Act as this. Such a proposal might lead to some doubt whether Ireland is precisely in such a state as that in which it ought to be if it is to receive the powers of local self-government which Her Majesty's Government desire to confer upon it. The observation has been made that Ireland is not one nation, and that observation has been received with very considerable dissent, not only on the part of hon. Members below the Gangway, but also on the part of Her Majesty's Government, and hon. Members sitting behind them. But all who have listened to the debate this evening, and who have heard the comments which have been freely made by hon. Members below the Gangway, and made with obvious sincerity with regard to parts of Ireland which are represented by hon. Members behind me, must feel that Ireland is not one nation, or, at any rate, that it is a nation in which the most vital differences exist on the most important subjects. The right hon. Gentleman the Lord Mayor of Dublin (Mr. T. D. Sullivan), when addressing the House, observed, I think, that there was no enmity on the part of hon. Members below the Gangway towards the Protestant minority in the North of Ireland, who are largely represented by the Orangemen. I do not say that there is any enmity on their part towards the Protestant minority; but I do say that if it were possible for them to make hostile comments in reference to the past and present history of Ireland which would excite the Protestant minority and aggravate them to the highest degree, those very comments have been made to-night. And, more than this, Sir, is there no mutual feeling of the kind? The hon. Member for the County of Cork (Dr. Tanner), who spoke last, told us of some of the experiences of his youth; and he said, if I heard him aright, that on one occasion the two opposing factions of the North of Ireland, represented by the Orangemen on the one hand, and the Catholics on the other, were only kept apart by the interference of the police.

Dr. TANNER: The right hon. Gentleman is under a complete misapprehension. I never said that it occurred in my youth. It occurred the other day, in the course of the last Election, and in the course of the candidature of my hon. Friend the Member for South Tyrone (Mr. W. O'Brien).

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: I am deeply obliged to the hon. Member for his interruption, because it adds very much to the force of the argument I intended to use. What we have to deal with, therefore, is not a matter that occurred 20 years ago, when probably the hon. Member was a young man, but a state of things existing only the other day, and with which Her Majesty's present Government have to deal in Ireland. They have to deal with all these Party differences, and with all these deep divisions, which, if we are to believe what has been said by hon. Members below the Gangway upon another measure, have no existence at all. This very Bill, and the debate upon it, are the best arguments which can be adduced against the very next measure which is on the Paper as a measure which can possibly be applied with any hope of a peaceful or successful issue to Ireland. I believe it is absolutely necessary, in the name of common sense and prudence, as the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland has stated to the House this evening, that the Bill before the House should be proceeded with and become law but for that very reason I say that the Government themselves, in proposing and in pressing forward this measure as one of exceptional urgency, have condemned the policy which they have presented to the House of treating Ireland as one united country, and of trusting in the honeyed words of hon. Members below the Gangway, as if no such difficulties as this Bill is intended to meet would ever occur again.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.): I am afraid that the right hon. Gentleman has displayed on this occasion a want of memory—a fault which he is not often guilty of. He would induce the House to believe that the introduction of the Arms Act is a very abnormal proceeding in the present state of Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman must have a very bad memory, or he would recollect that he himself introduced a similar Bill for five years; and that during the last 86 years countless Bills of a similar character have been passed. In the early part of the evening the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) made a speech in which he practically declared that under certain circumstances, of which they were to be the judges, the Orangemen of Ulster would be perfectly within the Constitution in resisting the law and having recourse to arms. No doubt, the language of the noble Lord was qualified; but it certainly meant that. Under these circumstances, I can very well imagine that if there was any moment which would justify the introduction of a measure of this kind, this is that precise moment, especially after such speeches as those delivered by the Marquess of Salisbury and the noble Lord the Member for

Paddington. I am altogether opposed to measures of disarmament, and I will give my reason briefly. If we permanently disarm a country we must inevitably lower the character of the inhabitants. ["Oh!"] Can hon. Members give me any case in history where a country has not had its character lowered, if not destroyed altogether, by being permanently disarmed? But I say that you cannot completely disarm Ireland. There will always exist a certain quantity of surreptitious arms in the country. I maintain that that is much worse than the licensed possession of arms, because men get possession of them in defiance of the law, and are taught to act in defiance of the law. That, therefore, constitutes another reason why, in my opinion, it is unwise to pass these disarming Acts. Then, again, they not only interfere with sport, but with agricultural operations, in consequence of the inability of the farmers to use firearms for the destruction of birds and other creatures which injure their crops. I do not believe that the passing of any measure of this kind will have the slightest effect in diminishing murder and outrage. As a matter of fact, surreptitious arms will remain in the hands of the worst class of people, and you will only be disarming the best part of the citizens, and the most deserving. Certainly, when a great change of this kind is pending over Ireland, and such inflammable speeches are delivered as that which has been made by the noble Lord the Member for Paddington, I cannot attach any considerable amount of blame to Her Majesty's Government for introducing such a Bill.

MR. REYNOLDS (Tyrone, E.): No hon. Member in this House can doubt that Her Majesty's Government would not have thought it necessary to introduce this Arms Act had it not been for the inflammatory speeches of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) in Ulster, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain). The noble Lord is notorious for his high principles and political consistency, and also for his courage; and I am sure that if a civil war should under any circumstances take place in Ireland, and an army be enrolled in Ulster, the noble Lord will not hesitate to exercise his hereditary right to go over to Ireland in charge of the Commissariat. My hon. Friend the Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) has stated to-night that he is sure the noble Lord has unintentionally incited to violence and disorder on the part of the Orangemen of Ulster; but can any man, after listening to the speech of the noble Lord to-night, say that the incitement is unintentional? The noble Lord has been perfectly consistent. What was the language he used before the passing of the last Reform Act? On that occasion he said that the labourers of England were not in earnest, for if they were they would march to London in their thousands, and pull down the Hyde Park railings. [Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: No!] I would ask the noble Lord whether, in speaking in this way, he is not laying down a most dangerous doctrine for the large mass of the working classes in England? If he finds that this House passes the Bill; that it is ratified by the House of Lords, and receives the Queen's Assent—should he find that it is displeasing to the people of the North of Ireland; that it is held by them to contain provisions which are oppressive and disagreeable, will he be justified in telling them to oppose the Bill by force? It cannot be said that the noble Lord acted without an example in regard to what might occur in Ulster, because the Earl of Iddesleigh made a speech of the same kind in Belfast, and the result was that a convent was wrecked and a nun died. What is the object of the noble Lord to-night? I am sure that he cares very little, in his secret heart, about the Orangemen of Ulster. The real object of his speech was to embarrass the Government, and to incite to outrage in the North of Ireland.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not entitled to impute motives of that kind to a Member of the House.

MR. REYNOLDS: I beg to withdraw the observation. What I meant to convey was this—that the speech of the noble Lord will have that effect in Ulster. I should not have risen to-night if it were not that I desire to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant to a matter of some importance. My hon. Friend the Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner) has informed the House that he accompanied me to a meeting in Tyrone at the last election, and that we addressed a large crowd of Nationalists, when an Orangeman presented a revolver. That man was prosecuted under this Act for carrying arms without a licence; three witnesses of unimpeachable veracity swore that they saw the revolver in this man's hand, and they were not contradicted by any witness who was called on behalf of the man himself. The solicitor who conducted the defence confined himself to one or two questions of this character—"Were you at this meeting of itinerant spouters?" and the witnesses having stated that they had attended my election meeting, the magistrate thought the evidence was sufficient, and dismissed the charge for carrying arms without a licence. I presume that tribunal was constituted in accordance with the provisions of the 5th section of the Peace Preservation Act of 1881; but what occurred was this—the Resident Magistrate was there, and there were four or five Orange magistrates on the Bench also. Ample proof was afforded that the man had a revolver in his possession; and when the unpaid magistrates refused to convict the Resident Magistrate retired from the Bench, intimating that he could not sit there and take part in the injustice which was about to be perpetrated by the other magistrates. Now, Sir, having had considerable experience of the way in which Justices' justice is administered in the North of Ireland, I would respectfully suggest to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary that the jurisdiction under this Act should be given to two Resident Magistrates, and that the local Justices should not have anything whatever to do with the administration of the Act. No matter how the right hon. Gentleman may protest that this Act will be fairly administered—and I am sure that, as far as he is concerned, it will be fairly administered—yet if this power is still left in the hands of the local magistrates the purposes of the Act will be defeated, and no good will come out of it.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I should not have risen at this hour if it had not been for the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach). I feel bound to congratulate him upon the discretion he has manifested. He has exhibited an extraordinary degree of discretion in not having made any allusion whatever to the speech of his noble Colleague the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill). That speech, remarkable as it was, he neither condemned nor approved; and that, too, in spite of frequent challenges from various parts of the House for an expression of opinion from him, as an ex-Minister of the Crown, as to whether he agreed with his noble Colleague in the strong and suggestive expressions he had used. I also congratulate him upon the considerable courage he has displayed. The right hon. Gentleman turned round to these Benches, from the place where the noble Lord spoke a few hours before, and charged hon. Members below the Gangway with having used provoking language. I do not think we ought to allow the right hon. Gentleman to escape so easily from his position. We want to know if the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington expressed the joint opinion of the Leaders of the Conservative Party when he encouraged treason against the Crown? The other day I ventured—being slightly out of Order, I admit—to interpolate a question to the Secretary of State for War as to some extraordinary statements which have been circulated, to the effect that high military authorities have indicated a disposition to take sides in the civil war which is said to be impending in the event of a certain measure becoming law. The question I asked was how many Irishmen, soldiers in Her Majesty's Army, who had acted on the principle suggested and proposed by the noble Lord, have been sentenced to death, or have served long periods of penal servitude? I would remind the noble Lord that the Office which he held in the last Government was that of Secretary of State for India, and that this principle of "contingent treason" and of armed resistance to the authority and force of the Crown is a doctrine that may find its way into the Vernacular Press of India, and produce effects upon millions of our fellow-subjects in that country, the consequences of which, I think, nobody can contemplate with equanimity. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition said that there were two nations in Ireland. Now, Sir, that is not the true state of the case. There is an overwhelming mass of Nationalists on one side—Catholics principally, but to a large extent Protestants also. An hon. Member who made a most effective speech to-night, in showing how Irishmen understand the duty of preserving law and order, is a Member of the Protestant Body. It must not be forgotten that in the North of Ireland there is a small section of Protestants who oppose themselves to the will of the masses of their fellow-countrymen, and who, when the occasion offers, are ready and willing to resort to measures of violence, because they are encouraged by vain hopes of assistance and countenance by such men as the noble Lord. It is such speeches as that of the noble Lord—and a policy like that which the noble Lord has pronounced to-night—very different from that which he advocated five or six months ago—it is speeches and policies like that which produce the bitter passions which are excited between different sections in Ireland. When Orangemen know that they have no ex-Ministers of the Crown to condone treason, and that acts against law and order will not be sustained, they will throw in their lot with the rest of their fellow-countrymen, and they will be as peaceable and orderly as the rest of the country. [*A laugh.*] I understand that laugh to mean that hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway deny the possibility of Orangemen ever being peaceable. What do these incitements mean? There are some hon. Members above the Gangway who make speeches which I think no one can agree with. The hon. Member for South Belfast (Mr. Johnston) makes speeches which none of us can agree with. But I respect the hon. Gentleman because, although his convictions are to my mind profoundly wrong and false, the hon. Gentleman believes them. The first time I ever saw the hon. Gentleman was at an Orange meeting, which I attended for purely professional purposes. The hon. Gentleman, at that time, had just fulfilled a sentence of imprisonment for breaking the laws of his country. If I were to imitate the language of some of the hon. Gentleman's Friends, I would say that the hon. Gentleman has been a "gaol bird" in his time. But I do not wish to make such an observation with regard to him in that spirit. The hon. Gentleman went to gaol for his convictions, and he sacrificed what in Ireland would be considered a well-paid position under the Crown for his convictions. Therefore, however much we may condemn his principles, we must admire the courage and honesty with which he has stuck to them. But what of the cold-blooded, cynical, and unbelieving politicians who use these profound political convictions and these terrible religious dissensions for the mean and despicable purpose of advancing their own personal and paltry Party prospects? I "would rather be a toad, and live upon the vapour of some foul dungeon," than rise to Office by such means. An hon. Friend has suggested that if there were to be civil disturbances in the North of Ireland, and the noble Lord were to be there, having encouraged by his speeches, both in and out of this House, recourse to violent means—if disturbances were to take place, and were not unattended by fatal results, my hon. Friend has asked—and I think it might be some compensation, because no man has a right to incite other men to violence without taking the risk himself — [Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Hear, hear!]—would the noble Lord be there? The noble Lord cheers that observation. Am I to understand from it that when the fight begins the noble Lord would be there, and not in charge of the Commissariat? Sir, there will be no civil war in Ulster. The Orangemen in the North of Ireland will be kept down by the Constabulary; but what may take place in the North of Ireland consequent upon the disturbed feeling which exists is this. Hon. Members who are unacquainted with the North of Ireland cannot well understand the state of feeling which exists there. The Act of Catholic Emancipation never came into force there until within the last few years, and it is not in full operation in the North of Ireland even to this day. I have heard hon. Gentlemen who come from the North of Ireland describe the *modus operandi.* Persons supporting the Nationalist cause attend a meeting for a Constitutional purpose; Orangemen appear at it armed with revolvers—sometimes bringing sacks full of revolvers. ["Oh!"] I am only quoting the words used by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Border Burghs (Mr. Trevelyan), who was Chief Secretary for Ireland at the time he used them. The Orangeman fires, or attempts to fire, his revolver at the Nationalist, and he is able to do so with perfect impunity, because, if arrested, he would be brought before Orange magistrates, who, even if they had themselves seen the revolver fired, would hesitate to convict. If, by a miracle, an Orange magistrate sent him before the Grand Jury, and if by another miracle he was sent to trial by a Grand Jury of Orangemen, good care would be taken to empanel a petty jury of Orangemen that would acquit him. When we have a hierarchy so complete as this, and when killing is no murder, there is sure to be murder. What, then, will take place in the North of Ireland? There will be no civil war; but in going home at night from fairs, in going to the Registration Courts, and perhaps to the elections, some poor Roman Catholics who may stray away from their companions will be set upon by Orangemen and murdered, as Philip Maguire was, and no one will be brought to justice, because the Orange magistrates are behind the culprits. That is the reason why the Chief Secretary is compelled to bring in a measure like this. It is the encouragement from England which causes the bitterness and lawlessness and the turbulence of the Orangemen; and when they are freed from this contaminating and demoralizing influence I am sure that Ireland will become as orderly and as law-abiding a country as any in the world.

Mr. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall) (who was received with great interruption) said: I have listened, Sir, with some amusement to the remarks which have been made by the hon. Member who has just sat down. The hon. Member would have been described by the Prime Minister, four years ago, as one who marched through rapine to the disintegration of the Empire. [*Interruption, and cries of* "Divide!"] I have listened attentively to the speech of the hon. Member. I am not surprised at the interruption which proceeds from this side of the House. I have observed the tactics which have been followed before by the hon. Member, and I have neither been intimidated by them, nor do I object to them. I had not the opportunity of hearing the remarks which were made by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), and I gather that they were remarks of a courageous and resolute character. A great deal of strong language has been used by the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down. He has accused Members of the Conservative Party of making statements which they are not prepared to support by action. [*Interruption.*] I have only two sentences to say upon that subject, and those two sentences I shall say in spite of the unmannerly turbulence of hon. Gentlemen opposite. We have heard that the disloyal and revolutionary Party in Ireland are likely to receive large support. I can only say there are in two of the Northern counties of this country —Yorkshire and Lancashire—100,000 men, and fighting men, too—who will know the reason why, before the cause of loyalty and order goes down in Ireland. I have the honour to be a humble Member, not only of this House, but also of a regiment of Militia, and I am confident that the whole of that regiment, and many others besides—[Mr. T. M. HEALY: What regiment?]—will volunteer for service before the cause of order and loyalty goes down in Ireland. ["Oh!"] I am amused by the mechanical ridicule with which that statement is received. I listened with great admiration the other night to the speech of one of the oldest, best known, and most respected Radicals in this House—the hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Leatham), who made remarks practically identical with those which I myself am now making, and which were also received with shouts of interruption from the same Benches. I will not repeat the hon. Member's words; but I am repeating the same sentiment as they expressed, and it is one which the bulk of this House and three-fourths of the people of Great Britain will endorse—namely, that the first shot of repression which is fired against the Loyalists of Ireland will be the cause of such an outburst of indignation in this country as will sweep Her Majesty's Ministers from their places, and perhaps mete out to them even a worse doom. There is plenty of spirit in the country yet, Sir, and I do not envy the Party that arouses against itself the national feeling of this country, nor do I envy the Ministry who go to the polls on a policy of disruption.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 303; Noes 89: Majority 214.

AYES.

Acland, C. T. D.
Agg-Gardner, J. T.
Agnew, W.
Allsopp, hon. G.
Amherst, W. A. T.
Arch, J.
Armitage, B.
Asher, A.
Baily, L. R.
Baker, L. J.
Balfour, rt. hon. A. J.
Balfour, rt. hon. J. B.
Balfour, Sir G.
Barbour, W. B.
Barttelot, Sir W. B.
Baumann, A. A.
Beach, right hon. Sir M. E. Hicks-
Beadel, W. J.
Beckett, E. W.
Beckett, W.
Bective, Earl of
Beith, G.
Bethell, Commander
Bickersteth, R.
Bickford-Smith, W.
Biddulph, M.
Birkbeck, Sir E.
Blake, T.
Blundell, Col. H. B. H.
Bolton, J. C.
Borlase, W. C.
Brassey, Sir T.
Brinton, J.
Bristowe, T. L.
Broadhurst, H.
Brocklehurst, W. C.
Brookfield, Col. A. M.
Brown, A. H.
Bruce, hon. R. P.
Brunner, J. T.
Bryce, J.
Buchanan, T. R.
Buckley, A.
Burt, T.
Caine, W. S.
Campbell, Sir A.
Campbell, Sir G.
Campbell, R. F. F.
Campbell-Bannerman, right hon. H.
Cavendish, Lord E.
Chamberlain, rt. hn. J.
Chamberlain, R.
Chaplin, right hon. H.
Charrington, S.
Childers, right hon. H. C. E.
Churchill, rt. hn. Lord R. H. S.
Clarke, E. G.
Cohen, L. L.
Commerell, Adml. Sir J. E.
Compton, Lord W. G.
Cook, E. R.
Cook, W.
Coote, T.
Corbett, J.
Corry, Sir J. P.
Courtney, L. H.
Cranborne, Viscount
Crawford, D.
Crompton, C.
Cross, rt. hn. Sir R. A.
Cross, H. S.
Crossley, E.
Crossman, Gen. Sir W.
Currie, Sir D.
Curzon, Viscount
De Cobain, E. S. W.
De Worms, Baron H.
Dillwyn, L. L.
Dimsdale, Baron R.
Dixon-Hartland, F. D.
Douglas, A. Akers-
Duckham, T.
Duff, R. W.
Duncan, Colonel F.
Duncombe, A.
Edwards-Moss, T. C.
Egerton, Admiral hon. F.
Elliot, hon. H. F. H.
Ellis, J.
Ellis, J. E.
Esslemont, P.
Evelyn, W. J.
Everett, R. L.
Fairbairn, Sir A.
Farquharson, H. R.
Fergusson, right hon. Sir J.
Ferguson, R.
Field, Admiral E.
Finlay, R. B.
Finlayson, J.
Fisher, W. H.
Fitzgerald, R. U. P.
Fitzwilliam, hon. W. J. W.
Fletcher, Sir H.
Flower, C.
Forwood, A. B.
Fowler, Sir R. N.
Fowler, H. H.
Fry, L.
Fry, T.
Gardner, H.
Gathorne-Hardy, hon. J. S.
Gibb, T. E.
Gibson, J. G.
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Gladstone, H. J.
Glyn, hon. P. C.
Goldsmid, Sir J.
Goldsworthy, Major-General W. T.
Gorst, Sir J. E.
Goschen, rt. hon. G. J.
Gower, G. G. L.
Grant, Sir G. M.
Green, Sir E.
Grenfell, W. H.
Grey, Sir E.
Grey, A.
Grimston, Viscount
Haldane, R. B.
Hall, C.
Hamilton, right hon. Lord G. F.
Hamilton, Lord C. J.
Hamilton, Lord E.
Hamilton, Lord F. S.
Hamilton, Col. C. E.
Hamley, Gen. Sir E. B.
Hankey, F. A.
Harcourt, E. W.
Hardcastle, F.
Hayne, C. Seale-
Heaton, J. H.
Herbert, hon. S.
Hervey, Lord F.
Hibbert, rt. hn. J. T.
Hill, Lord A. W.
Hingley, B.
Hoare, S.
Hobhouse, H.
Holden, A.
Holland, rt. hon. Sir H. T.
Holmes, rt. hon. H.
Hope, right hon. A. J. B. B.
Howard, E. S.
Howard, H. C.
Hughes-Hallett, Col. F. C.
Hunt, F. S.
Hutton, J. F.
Isaacs, L. H.
Jacks, W.
James, rt. hon. Sir H.
James, hon. W. H.
James, C. H.
Jardine, Sir R.
Jenkins, Sir J. J.
Jenkins, D. J.
Johns, J. W.
Johnson-Ferguson, J. E.
Johnston, W.
Jones, P.
Kay-Shuttleworth, rt. hon. Sir U. J.
Kenny, C. S.
Ker, R. W. B.
Kilcoursie, right hon. Viscount
Kimber, H.
King, H. S.
Kitching, A. G.
Latham, G. W.
Lawrance, J. C.
Lawrence, W. F.
Lawson, H. L. W.
Lefevre, rt. hon. G. S.
Lethbridge, Sir R.
Lewisham, Viscount
Llewellyn, E. H.
Long, W. H.
Lubbock, Sir J.
Lyell, L.
Lymington, Viscount
Macdonald, right hon. J. H. A.
MacInnes, M.
Maclean, J. M.
M'Arthur, A.
M'Calmont, Captain J.
M'Culloch, J.
M'Iver, L.
M'Lagan, P.
Marton, Maj. G. B. H.
Mason, S.
More, R. J.
Morgan, rt. hon. G. O.
Morley, rt. hon. J.
Mulholland, H. L.
Muntz, P. A.
Newark, Viscount
Norris, E. S.
Northcote, hon. H. S.
Norton, R.
O'Neill, hon. R. T.
Paget, T. T.
Parker, C. S.
Paulton, J. M.
Peacock, R.
Pease, A. E.
Pease, H. F.
Pelly, Sir L.
Pickersgill, E. H.
Picton, J. A.
Pilkington, G. A.
Playfair, rt. hon. Sir L.
Plunket, rt. hon. D. R.
Pomfret, W. P.
Portman, hon. E. B.
Powell, F. S.
Powell, W. R. H.
Price, Captain G. E.
Price, T. P.
Pugh, D.
Quilter, W. C.
Rathbone, W.
Reed, Sir E. J.
Rigby, J.
Roberts, J.
Roberts, J. B.
Robertson, E.
Robertson, J. P. B.
Robinson, T.
Robson, W. S.
Roe, T.
Ross, A. H.
Rothschild, Baron F. J. de
Round, J.
Russell, Sir C.
Ruston, J.
St. Aubyn, Sir J.
Salis-Schwabe, Col. G.
Sandys, Lieut-Col. T. M.
Seely, C.
Shaw, T.
Sheridan, H. B.
Shirley, W. S.
Sidebottom, T. H.
Sidebottom, W.
Sitwell, Sir G. R.
Smith, rt. hon. W. H.
Smith, A.
Smith, D.
Smith, S.
Spencer, hon. C. R.
Stanhope, rt. hon. E.
Stanley, rt. hon. Col. Sir F. A.
Stanley, E. J.
Stansfeld, right hon. J.
Stevenson, F. S.
Stewart, M. J.
Sturrock, P.

Sutherland, T.
Swinburne, Sir J.
Talbot, C. R. M.
Talbot, J. G.
Taylor, F.
Temple, Sir R.
Tennant, Sir C.
Thomas, A.
Tipping, W.
Tomlinson, W. E. M.
Tottenham, A. L.
Valentine, C. J.
Vanderbyl, P.
Vivian, Sir H. H.
Walrond, Col. W. H.
Walsh, hon. A. H. J.
Wason, E.
Watkin, Sir E. W.
Watson, J.
Watson, T.
Wayman, T.
West, Colonel W. C.
Westlake, J.
Weston, J. D.
Whitbread, S.
White, J. B.
Whitley, E.
Will, J. S.
Williams, A. J.
Williams, J. P.
Wilson, C. H.
Wilson, J. (Ednbrgh.)
Winterbotham, A. B.
Wodehouse, E. R.
Woodall, W.
Woodhead, J.
Yeo, F. A.
Young, C. E. B.

TELLERS.

Marjoribanks, rt. hon. E.
Morley, A.

NOES.

Abraham, W. (Glam.)
Abraham, W. (Limerick, W.)
Atherley-Jones, L.
Biggar, J. G.
Blake, J. A.
Blane, A.
Boyd-Kinnear, J.
Byrne, G. M.
Campbell, H.
Carew, J. L.
Chance, P. A.
Cobb, H. P.
Coleridge, hon. B.
Condon, T. J.
Connolly L.
Conway,M.
Conybeare, C. A. V.
Corbet, W. J.
Cox, J. R.
Crawford, W.
Cremer, W. R.
Crilly, D.
Deasy, J.
Dillon, J.
Esmonde, Sir T.
Fenwick, C.
Finucane, J.
Flynn, J. C.
Fox, Dr. J. F.
Gilhooly, J.
Gill, H. J.
Gill, T. P.
Gray, E. D.
Harrington, E.
Harrington, T.
Harris, M.
Hayden, L. P.
Healy, M.
Healy, T. M.
Hooper, J.
Jordan, J.
Kelly, B.
Kenny, M. J.
Labouchere, H.
Lalor, R.
Lane, W. J.
Leahy, J.
Leamy, E.
M'Carthy, J.
M'Carthy, J. H.
M'Donald, P.
M'Kenna, Sir J. N.
Marum, E. M.
Molloy, B. C.
Morgan, O. V.
Murphy, W. M.
Nolan, Colonel J. P.
Nolan, J.
O'Brien, J. F. X.
O'Brien, P.
O'Brien, P. J.
O'Brien, W.
O'Connor, A.
O'Connor, J. (Kerry)
O'Connor, J. (Tippry.)
O'Connor, T. P.
O'Doherty, Dr. K. I.
O'Hanlon, T.
O'Hea, P.
O'Kelly, J.
O'Mara, S.
Parnell, C. S.
Power, P. J.
Power, R.
Pyne, J. D.
Redmond, W. H. K.
Reynolds, W. J.
Rogers, J. E. T.
Russell, E. R.
Sexton, T.
Sheehan, J. D.
Sheehy, D.
Stack, J.
Sullivan, D.
Sullivan, T. D.
Tanner, C. K.
Tuite, J.
Verney, Captain E. H.
Wilson, J. (Durham)

TELLERS.

Redmond, J. E.
Sheil, E.

Bill *committed* for *Monday* next.

LOSSES BY RIOT (COMPENSATION) BILL.—[BILL 209.]

(*Mr. Childers, Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Attorney General.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): Sir, in rising to move that this Bill be read a second time I may mention that on the Motion for its introduction I explained its provisions fairly to the House; and it is, therefore, unnecessary for me to make any further statement as to its nature. I was, however, asked one question, as to whether the Bill would be made retrospective; and, after full consideration, I have come to the conclusion that it would be right and proper to make the Bill retrospective to a certain extent. The clause which my hon. Friend has put down is one which I think we can adopt in its entirety, and I propose to accept it in Committee. The effect will be that if the Police Authorities outside the Metropolis think it right that compensation should be given in respect of riots that have occurred during the last 12 months they may make an order to that effect, so that persons who have suffered from such riots shall be allowed to claim compensation.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Childers.*)

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): Sir, I do not at all wish to delay this legislation; but I confess that, so far as my own county is concerned, I do not think there is any necessity for it. We had in Gloucestershire some little trouble at the last Election. A riot arose and some damage was done; but there was no difficulty whatever in assessing and paying such compensation as was found to be due. But I think the area of compensation was confined to the Hundreds; and I must say that I think it much fairer that compensation should be paid by a limited district than by the county at large. At present, as the right hon. Gentleman is aware, the area of Parliamentary divisions is much smaller than that of the counties, especially in the larger counties of England. The county area of compensation provided for in this Bill would, therefore, be very much larger than the area interested in an election riot, which does not seem to me to afford a very fair solution of this question. I think that the area in which the riot occurs should be the area to pay for the damage done, and not a district beyond, which has had nothing whatever to do with the matter. It is certainly hardly fair to levy the charge for compensation on the whole county. I merely throw out this now as my impression; but the matter is one which I think will have to be dealt with in Committee.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir CHARLES RUSSELL) (Hackney, S.): The difficulty as to adopting the old Hundred as the area of liability is that, for any practical purposes, it is almost obsolete. Moreover, it corresponds with no police rating areas; and as the principle of the Bill is to recognize liability for defective police protection resulting in damage by riot, it has been thought better to make the area of liability correspond with the area of separate police districts. Further, the Hundred frequently cuts up towns and even villages, and suggests no practical basis. The suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman will, however, be carefully considered.

SIR R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): Sir, speaking of my own county only, I may say that the Hundreds there are perfectly distinct and recognized divisions of the county, and we have Hundred rates there for various purposes — for gaols and for damage. In Lancashire we have never had any difficulty in assessing damage so far as the Hundreds are concerned. But with regard to this Bill, I see that the damage is all to be paid for out of the police rate. You are going to take the whole of this enormous county of Lancashire, which consists practically of several counties, and make it liable for the consequences of a riot that may occur in any part of it. Well, Sir, all I can say is that there will be a very great objection to the arrangement; and I cannot but think that the course which the right hon. Gentleman proposes will lead to considerable disturbance. However, I feel that the question is one which will have to be decided in Committee; and I only rise because I think the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department will have to give a little more attention to the point raised by my right hon. Friend before we go into Committee than he seems to have done already.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): Sir, I doubt whether the wording in the Bill is in all cases quite distinct enough. The words "house, shop, or building" do not seem to me sufficiently comprehensive; because, for instance, a garden may be very much damaged in a variety of ways, and it would not be included in the words "house, shop, or building."

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Nottingham, S.): I have to thank the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department for accepting the clause which will render the Bill in some respects retrospective in its character. I observe that the Bill requires the sending in of claims; but in the case of the borough which I represent the claims have been sent in already, and it would be a pity to impose upon the people concerned the necessity of going over the ground again. I hope that the clause will be so framed as to render that unnecessary.

MR. CHILDERS: The question raised by the right hon. Gentleman (Sir R. Assheton Cross) is one of great importance, and I will look into it. One of the difficulties which will be found in carrying out the right hon. Gentleman's suggestion is that in some counties the Hundreds are altogether obsolete, and do not correspond with anything. With regard to the question of sending in claims afresh, referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham (Mr. Carvell Williams), I propose to take power to relax the Rule in case of need.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

FRESHWATER FISHERIES BILL.

(*Mr. Mundella, Mr. C. T. D. Acland.*)

[BILL 218.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. C. T. D. Acland.*)

SIR R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): Before this Bill is read a second time I should like to put a question to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Launceston (Mr. C. T. D. Acland). As far as I understand, the object of this Bill is simply to transfer all the duties of the Home Office, with regard to inland fisheries, to the Board of Trade. I know that for a long time there has been a great desire on the part of the Board of Trade that the Home Office should allow the Inspectors who deal with the sea fisheries to deal with the inland fisheries also, and I presume that this Bill is intended to provide that the one set of Inspectors shall deal with the two fisheries. Now, unless there is some strong reason to the contrary, no one wishes to add to the labours of the Home Office, or to keep in the Home Office work that other people can do as well or better—no one can wish to do that. So far as I have been able to observe from experience, the Local Authorities had much better remain where they are than go to the Board of Trade. The Board of Trade has a large mass of business to do, and hitherto the inland fisheries have been well attended to by the Home Office. Therefore, before the Bill is read a second time, I should like to hear some reason for the transfer, because up to the present none has been afforded. I have never heard any complaint as to the action of the Home Office, and I believe the Local Authorities would much rather remain with the Home Office than be carried to the Board of Trade. Of course I cannot speak again at this stage, and, therefore, any answer I may have to make to the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Acland) I will reserve until Committee.

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. C. T. D. ACLAND) (Cornwall, Launceston): Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman opposite will recollect that about a month or six weeks ago there was a long debate on the subject of the concentration of the direction of the fisheries in England in one Office. I think that at that time it was fully understood that it would be better, and my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) undertook to do his best, to concentrate within the Board of Trade itself, if that should be the pleasure of the House, all the administration of fisheries of every description in England. As the right hon. Gentleman (Sir R. Assheton Cross) is aware, the Board of Trade has at present an immense amount of work in connection with marine matters and with harbours and foreshores. As freshwater fisheries must, to some extent, be connected with the estuaries of rivers, it seemed to us that it would simplify matters if all the business connected with fisheries were intrusted to one Department. It is impossible for the Board of Trade to hand over the administration of the Mercantile Marine and of harbours and foreshores to the Home Office; and therefore the simplest and easiest, and the least expensive, method is to transfer the business connected with the freshwater fisheries from the Home Office to the Board of Trade. Of course, there will be full opportunity for explanation when the Bill gets into Committee. If the right hon. Gentleman wishes it, we can defer the Committee until Monday, or we can take it to-morrow. [Sir R. ASSHETON CROSS: Not to-morrow.] Then we will put it down for Monday.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

STANNARIES ACT (1869) AMENDMENT BILL.—[BILL 203.]

(*Sir John St. Aubyn, Mr. Courtney, Viscount Ebrington, Mr. Bickford-Smith, Mr. Seale-Hayne.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

SIR JOHN ST. AUBYN (Cornwall, W., St. Ives): The subject-matter of this Bill is one which only affects the two Western Counties, and, therefore, it cannot be expected to have any general interest to the House; yet it is only respectful to the House that I should endeavour, in a very few words, to explain what is the object sought to be attained by this Bill. The Bill arises from certain deficiencies which have been found to exist in the Stannaries Act of 1869, which regulates the proceedings of the Stannary Court, which Court, as hon. Members may be aware, regulates all matters connected with mining within the counties of Cornwall and Devon, and the Bill provides certain remedies which have been found necessary, especially in the interest of the working miners in Cornwall and Devon. The first few clauses provide that in all cases the wages of the working miners shall have priority over all claims on the mine itself. It was intended that that should be the case by the Act of 1869, which I myself had the honour of passing through this House; but it has been found that in certain cases, and especially in cases of bankruptcy where the Sheriff and debenture holders have been able to enter, miners have been ousted from their wages until the assets on the mine have been realized. That has been the result of a decision of the Stannary Court, and there have been cases in which the assets could not be realized, and the working miners have been kept for a long time without the money due to them. The effect of these clauses is, shortly, that in all cases, without exception, the wages of miners shall have a prior claim of anything else. The 9th clause—an important one for the miners of our counties—provides that the wages shall be payable at the end of 14 days from the expiration of the month in which the work was done. The present system is that the work which is done in one month — say, in the month of January—is paid for at the end of the second month—that is to say, at the end of the month of February. That has been productive of a certain amount of inconvenience. Those engaged in working mines, Companies, and adventurers, have found it possible to shorten the time by 14 days; and this clause provides that the miners shall be paid at the end of 14 days from the expiration of the month in which the work was done. It further provides that, at the end of 14 days from the beginning of the work, they shall be entitled to demand a certain amount of payment on account of the work already done, so that they shall not be kept without the means of subsistence until the time when they are paid in the ordinary way. If there should be any dispute between the working miners and the owners or managers of the mine as to the amount which is due the miners are entitled to go before two or more Justices of the Peace, who will determine the amount and enable them to receive it in a summary manner. The 10th clause provides for the registration in the Stannary Court of

> "All mortgages, debentures, and other documents whatever, whereby power is given by any Company to any persons to take possession of any mining effects of or on a mine."

At present these are only registered at the office of the Company. The office of the Company may be in London, and when that is the case it is extremely difficult for those persons in the county who are interested or who may have claims on the mine to ascertain what the debts and liabilities of the mine are, and it has been felt it would be more to the interest of all concerned if it were made compulsory that the registration of these debts and liabilities should be made in the Stannary Court. The 11th clause provides that a copy of all grants and licences for work shall be filed in the Registrar's Office of the Stannary Court; and by Clauses 14 and 16 it is provided that regular meetings of the shareholders shall be held at least once every 16 weeks, and that at these meetings all accounts shall be produced, and another clause provides that the accounts shall be absolutely accurate, and penalties are provided for any case of the falsification of accounts. Another clause provides for the amalgamation of Companies, having leases to work land adjoining by mutual agreement. It will be seen that that is a great advantage. Very often in Cornwall and Devon the lodes run through the country, as we call it. It would manifestly lead to a saving of expense—for pumping water, for instance—if the Companies whose lands adjoined were enabled to amalgamate for the purpose of working. For that a statutory provision is required, and that is provided by the 18th clause of this Bill. The 19th clause gives exclusive jurisdiction to the Stannary Court to wind up Companies in the counties of Cornwall and Devon in the Stannary Court. At present Companies which are actually worked must be wound up within the Stannary Court; but Companies which are only formed for the purpose of working can be wound up in London. It often happens that Companies are formed, but it is never intended to work them. Certain liabilities are incurred, and if the Companies are wound up in London and not in the county, those in the county who are interested, and who may be creditors, have no opportunity of knowing what is going on, and they cannot stop improper proceedings which very often take place. If Companies, whether they have been worked or only formed and not worked, are wound up in the county, everyone concerned will be able to watch the proceedings. The last clauses insure the registration of Mining Companies and Returns in the Stannary Court. By the Companies Act, 1862, the Board of Trade had power to name certain places for the winding up of these Companies, and accordingly they named the Stannary Court. For some years—the exact number of years I do not recollect—that has been done away with, and the Board of Trade revoked their Order. The consequence is that some of these mines are registered in London, and some in Truro. That is a great inconvenience also, and is productive of considerable loss to those interested in mines. Clause 20 provides that—

> "The Registrar's office at Truro shall be the sole office for the registration of Companies formed under the Companies Act, 1862, with the exclusive or primary object of working mines within the jurisdiction of the said stannaries."

The House will see, therefore, that this Bill gives, in the first place, great protection to the miners themselves in respect to their wages; that, in the second place, it provides that they can demand payments on account; and that, in the third place, it provides additional and very proper security for the fair and honest working of all mines within the stannaries. The Bill has been prepared by those who are interested in mining in the counties of Cornwall and Devon, and I trust it will receive the approval of the House. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir John St. Aubyn.*)

MR. BICKFORD-SMITH (Cornwall, Truro): I beg to support the second reading.

An hon. MEMBER: I should like to know why the Bill should be confined to the two counties of Cornwall and Devon —why it should not be extended to the whole Kingdom?

SIR JOHN ST. AUBYN: It is only a Bill to amend the Act relating to the Stannaries Act of 1869, which applies to the counties of Cornwall and Devon; it is entirely a local Act.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): Of course, a great deal depends upon the practice in Cornwall, and I have no doubt it is very desirable many of these changes should be made; but the House should bear in mind the fact that this is a Bill which, besides dealing with mines in Cornwall, operates on the present system of Judicature. At the present time every creditor of a Company, under the Companies Acts, has a right to come to the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice, and have the Company wound up there. I was not able to follow the hon. Baronet (Sir John St. Aubyn) sufficiently closely to speak with absolute certainty; but I understood the hon. Baronet to say that in the future it will be compulsory, in the case of winding up a Company working a mine in Cornwall, that the winding up should take place in the Stannary Court. This will completely oust the jurisdiction of the High Court in the case of this class of Company, and also, to that extent, diminish the privileges of the creditors of any Company of this kind. Moreover, it will be very necessary for any person interested in these Mining Companies to bear in mind that in future he is able to get no information in respect to such Companies from the Register of Joint Stock Companies in London. The Register of Joint Stock Companies is no longer to be a Register in which all Companies of limited liability can be found. These are provisions of considerable importance, going beyond the case of Cornwall and Devon. What I wish to know is, whether these questions have been considered by the Legal Advisers to the Government? I do not see the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General (Sir Charles Russell) in his place; but perhaps it may be in the power of some other Minister to give us the opinion of the Government with respect to the points I have raised?

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): It is rather late (1 o'clock) to enter upon the consideration of a Bill which raises matters of such importance as this Bill. I do not know that it would be wise for me to follow the hon. Baronet (Sir John St. Aubyn) into all the details he has mentioned; but, indeed, I do not propose to do so. This is a matter of very great importance and interest to the mining division of

Cornwall which I have the honour to represent. The Bill is introduced professedly in the interest of the mining population of Cornwall; but, strange to say, the mining population of my constituency reject it. It is impossible to say that the measure meets with anything like general approval or satisfaction amongst the population it is intended to benefit. There is one demand, Sir, which the miners whom I represent are strongly insisting upon, and that is that their wages should be paid fortnightly, and not monthly. On a recent occasion — at Easter — when I was in Cornwall, I was asked to meet a large number of gentlemen who are promoting this Bill. They formed what is called a county committee, and they consisted of landlords, bankers, smelters, agents, and others. They do not represent the bulk of the population or the bulk of the electorate; but they have constituted themselves into a sort of Select Committee to thrust on this particular bit of legislation. At the meeting of which I have spoken I pointed out what was very generally known—namely, that the miners asked very strongly that their wages should be paid once a fortnight instead of once a month; and I urged on the meeting that they should embody a provision of that kind in their Bill, if they wanted it to be of the slightest use to the working population. The meeting flatly refused to do anything of the kind. That is one, and the principal, reason why I maintain that my constituents are perfectly right in rejecting this Bill. This Bill, along with the Mines Bill which has been introduced into this House by myself and several hon. Members, has been fully considered and discussed from end to end of my constituency; and at every meeting where the matter has been taken into consideration the miners of Cornwall, inside and outside of my constituency, have rejected this Bill, and have authorized me in my place in the House of Commons to support and advocate their rejection of it. I have, therefore, no course to pursue but to object to this measure. I took what, a short time ago, appeared to me the best course under the circumstances — I put upon the Paper a Notice to the effect that the second reading of this measure should be taken on the 22nd of June, the day on which the Mines Bill is set down for second reading. I did so because I wished not to kick this Bill and the sister-Bill, which, I suppose, we shall discuss presently, ignominiously out of the House by putting down the usual Blocking Notice—I did not wish to treat a Cornish Colleague so disrespectfully—but because I thought it would save the time of the House to have the two Bills affecting the interests of the miners of Cornwall discussed together and at a proper time. I withdrew that Amendment at your request, Sir, because, as I learned, I had, in my ignorance, put down the Amendment in an unprecedented form. Under all the circumstances of the case, I think the best course for me to take is to move the adjournment of the debate, with a view of securing that the Bill shall be considered at a time when its merits and all the issues at stake can be adequately discussed. I have a great many reasons which, if there were now time, I could advance against the Bill. Of course, I am not saying there are no good points in the Bill; it would be difficult for an amending Bill not to have some features in it deserving of consideration, and which are meritorious in themselves. Looking to the scope and general policy of the Bill, and having regard to the history of the Bill, with which I shall not at present trouble the House, but of which I may be able to say a good deal on another occasion, I consider it would be unwise for the House to pass the second reading of this measure at 1 o'clock in the morning. I therefore beg to move that this debate be now adjourned.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I beg to second the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*Mr. Conybeare.*)

SIR JOHN ST. AUBYN (Cornwall, W., St. Ives): I am sorry to come in collision with my hon. Colleague on this occasion; but I must call his attention and that of the House to the fact that I myself represent a very large mining constituency, and that I have not had one word of complaint from any single miner in my constituency, nor has any sound of complaint from any miner elsewhere in Cornwall against the provisions of this Bill reached me. I perfectly understand that it is legitimate the hon. Member should wish to go further in many respects than this Bill goes; but surely we may pass this Bill with safety, and carry further measures hereafter, if it is the general wish. If there had been such a unanimous feeling amongst the miners of Cornwall against this Bill as the hon. Gentleman says, I should surely have received some Petitions by this time from the working miners in my own constituency, and the hon. Member would have received several to present to the House from the working miners in his own constituency. There are others besides the hon. Gentleman and myself returned from Cornwall, and I am not aware that they have received any complaints against the Bill. I put it to the hon. Member whether he would not be acting with greater advantage to those whom he claims specially to represent if he allowed the Bill, which really has for its object a great amendment in the condition of the working miners, to pass the second reading, and reserve to himself full liberty to propose in Committee whatever Amendments he thinks necessary. The adoption of such a course would leave him full option to proceed with his own Bill and carry the Amendment further if he thinks proper.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I cannot answer the question put to the Government by the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Tomlinson) on the Motion for the adjournment of the debate. I appeal to the hon. Member (Mr. Conybeare) not to press his Motion for adjournment. When the Bill was introduced I objected to its being read a second time suddenly, and I asked my hon. Friend (Sir John St. Aubyn) to postpone the second reading until to-day. I therefore think it would be unreasonable to reject the second reading now. I feel confident the hon. Member (Sir John St. Aubyn) will allow plenty of time between this and the Committee stage, so that hon. Members from Cornwall may be able to put down Amendments and the Government may be able to consider them. Of course, we are not able to consider Amendments until the Bill has passed the second reading, because Amendments cannot be put down until this stage has been agreed to. If my hon. Friend will give a fortnight, or some such reasonable time, for the consideration of the Amendments, I will take care that the Government will consider them well before the Committee stage.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): Under the circumstances, I am willing to withdraw my Motion, reserving to myself the right to offer whatever opposition I think right on a future occasion. Perhaps I may be allowed a word of explanation in respect of what my hon. Friend (Sir John St. Aubyn) has said, and it is that I know of one place—St. Just—in his constituency the miners of which are of the same mind in regard to the Bill as the miners in my constituency.

MR. JOHN WILSON (Durham, Houghton-le-Spring): I should like to know whether, if the Bill is read a second time, it will be competent in Committee to move that the general principle of the measure should apply to the whole of the country? There are many of us who think that whatever good there is in the Bill in the interest of miners ought to apply to the country generally, and not only to the counties of Cornwall and Devon. If it be competent to move that the operation of the Bill be extended, we should all the more readily agree to the second reading.

MR. SPEAKER: It is quite competent for the hon. Gentleman to make such a Motion at a subsequent stage.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): My Colleagues and myself are not very much interested in this Bill, because there are very few miners in our country; but we consider that in a matter like this we should be guided by the wishes of the Representatives of the mining districts. The Bill was introduced and read a first time when our minds were occupied by other and more serious matters. We now find, however, that some of the Representatives of the mining population wish to have the principle of the Bill extended to the whole of the country. It is possible we may wish such an extension in the interest of the few miners of Ireland. We would not, however, oppose the second reading now if we received from the hon. Baronet (Sir John St. Aubyn) who has moved the second reading an intimation of his intention to fix a reasonably long interval between this and Committee, say, at least, a fortnight.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time.

SIR JOHN ST. AUBYN (Cornwall, W., St. Ives): I propose to take the Committee stage upon Thursday the 3rd of June.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): Perhaps, upon this Motion, the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Childers) may be inclined to answer the question I put to the Government.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I do not know whether I should be quite in Order, but, if so, I would simply say we think that the stannary system should continue to apply to miners in Cornwall.

Bill *committed* for *Thursday* 3rd June.

MINING LEASES (CORNWALL AND DEVON) BILL.—[BILL 204.]

(*Sir John St. Aubyn, Mr. Courtney, Viscount Ebrington, Mr. Bickford - Smith, Mr. Seale-Hayne.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

SIR JOHN ST. AUBYN (Cornwall, W., St. Ives): I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir John St. Aubyn.*)

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I have a much stronger objection to this Bill than I had to the last. The Bill does not deal, I think, with a single one of the great grievances we in Cornwall complain of. The public of Cornwall are in favour of a far more direct and stringent reform of the laws relating to mining leases than anything contained in this measure. This measure has been condemned by the public opinion of the county as inadequate and useless to remedy the evils which are complained of. The people of Cornwall, taken as a body, are in favour of the establishment of a Mining Commission for the purpose of dealing with mining questions. The china clay industry, in particular, has been ostentatiously excluded from whatever benefit this Bill may give, and there is a very strong feeling against the Bill upon that ground alone. The question of dues upon profits, which is really the burning question in connection with the important mining industry of Cornwall, is not dealt with at all by this Bill; while questions connected with compensation for improvements, fines, and other matters of great importance to the adventurers and others concerned in the mines in Cornwall, are treated in the most inadequate fashion. It is perfectly well known that a measure has been introduced in this House to extend to the whole country, and to deal in a systematic and a thoroughly reforming manner with all the questions in which great interest is felt in every mining constituency of the country. The passing of this Bill would simply be used as an argument in favour of excluding Cornwall from the benefits of the Mines Bill when it comes to be passed in a future Session. This matter has been fully discussed throughout Cornwall, and the feeling has been most strongly expressed that while all classes are anxious for some reform it would be a very great mistake to rush through Parliament a very inefficient and inadequate reform this Session, thus depriving, possibly, Cornishmen of the advantages of a much more thorough-going measure of reform which may come next Session, or the Session after. I am speaking what is common knowledge in the district to which I allude, when I say that this zeal on the part of the landlords and other interested persons for a reform of the law regulating mines is perfectly new, and was never exhibited before my candidature for a seat in this House last year. Nothing will satisfy them now than to rush through Parliament a paltry Bill, in order to bilk a great measure which practically meets the wishes of all the Mining Representatives in the House of Commons. I have no hesitation whatever in moving the adjournment of the debate upon this Bill, as I did upon the last, but with this difference—that I shall now press it to a division.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I beg to second the Motion of the hon. Member (Mr. Conybeare). In my judgment, small reforms like this prevent the passing of larger ones. While, of course, it is very nice for hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway on the other side of the House to propose Bills of this kind, we should have great regard for the opinion of those who really represent the working miners. Practically it all amounts to this—where two-thirds of the landed class in this country want to let a mine, they can do so in spite of the other one-third. What possible advantage does that give to the mining population of the country? None whatever. What good is done to the great mass of people who want to be benefited by Bills of this class? I say none whatever. I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on his moderation in not opposing the Bill by a block. Hon. Members representing English constituencies make a great mistake if they suppose that because we have not many mines in Ireland we do not take an interest in this matter. We do take great interest in it, not only on account of our own few mines, but on account of the interest we take in the mining population of this country, who are displaying such marked sympathy with the people of Ireland at this time. We Irish Members, however, have, perhaps, no right to interfere in a discussion affecting the demands of a place like Cornwall; still, we feel it right to point out that these petty reforms, framed in such a manner as to enable the Government to accept them, often prevent much larger and more beneficial measures being brought forward and carried to a successful issue. These small measures receive the name of "reforms," which in reality they are not. They are intended to make the people believe that something is being done for them. This is only a small Bill touching the fringe of the question, and that is why hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway opposite accept it. We think that hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway are right in offering opposition, and if the hon. Member persists in his Motion he will get our support.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*Mr. Conybeare.*)

Sir JOHN St. AUBYN (Cornwall, W., St. Ives): If the hon. Member had given attention to the Bill he would not have said, as he did, that the clause which provides that two-thirds of the landed class can control the letting of mines is the only important clause in the Bill. There are other important clauses. I would point out——

Mr. CONYBEARE: I rise to Order, Mr. Speaker. Is not the Question before the House the Motion for the adjournment of the debate? The hon. Member has no right to go into the merits of the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: When the hon. Member is out of Order I shall stop him.

Sir JOHN St. AUBYN: I ask the indulgence of the House for a few moments in order to answer the hon. and learned Gentleman who has just sat down, and to answer the hon. Gentleman below the Gangway. The latter said the measure had been universally condemned throughout the county of Cornwall, and that he thought it was a landlord's measure. He must know that it is not a Bill drawn up and approved solely by the landlords, but by those whose interests——

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is now speaking to the Main Question, and not to the Motion for the adjournment of the debate.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 72; Noes 69: Majority 3.—(Div. List, No. 102.)

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): What day is the debate to be put off to?

Debate *adjourned* till *Thursday* 3rd June.

MOTIONS.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (IRELAND) (CLERICAL INTERFERENCE).

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to prevent Clerical interference before, at, and during a Parliamentary Election in Ireland."—(*Captain M'Calmont.*)

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): Before a Bill of this importance is brought in we should have some explanation of its provisions from the hon. and gallant Member in charge of it. There is a Standing Order which says that Bills dealing—as I presume this one does—with religion shall be brought in in Committee. It may be said, however, that this Bill does not interfere with religion, but is only to prevent clergymen from interfering with elections. We know nothing about any such interference, and we doubt whether it exists. After this, we may have Bills brought in to prevent landlords interfering with elections, and then to prevent similar interference on the part of the agents of landlords, and so on. All these subjects are of importance, and it is perfectly monstrous to initiate this kind of legislation without a word of explanation. I shall feel bound, therefore, to oppose the introduction of the Bill, unless some explanation is given of the measure.

CAPTAIN M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.): My object in wishing to introduce this Bill is simply to add to the purity of elections. I believe there is a certain amount of intimidation connected with elections in Ireland. The hon. and learned Gentleman below the Gangway says no information of interference with elections on the part of clergymen exists; and, if that is so, it cannot be said that I am interfering with the rights of candidates at elections. I am merely adding to the purity of elections by this measure; it would apply to clergymen of all denominations. I venture to hope that the House will consent to allow it to be proceeded with.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I am afraid the explanation of the hon. and gallant Member is hardly satisfactory. I think the hon. and gallant Gentleman cannot be aware that there is in existence a severe Act dealing with corrupt and improper acts at elections, which makes it penal for anyone to improperly "interfere" with an election. I think the introduction of a Bill of this character would throw serious aspersions on the character of the clergy of all denominations, not only in Ireland, but over the whole of England; and I think the House should hesitate before allowing such an intolerant measure as this to be brought in. I am not aware that it has been proved in any Court of Law that during the recent General Election contests were influenced or interfered with by the clergy of any denomination; and I think it would be an unfortunate state of things if we could not pass through the ordeal of a General Election without such a Bill as this. We know that through the interference of the political Party to which the hon. and gallant Member belongs we had contests all through Ireland at the last Election, a great many of them being vexatious and unnecessary; therefore, we may assume that the object now in view is to increase the chances of these Gentlemen of being able to find flaws in elections, so as to upset the return of Nationalist candidates. This Bill extends only to Ireland. We have, as I say, in that country had no interference by the clergy with elections on the National, or popular side. I believe, however, it may be said with truth that there was clerical interference on what I may term the unpopular side in England. It is a significant fact, therefore, that the hon. and gallant Member desires to impose such stringent measures upon Ireland, where the doctrines which his political Party hold are supported by so few members of any form of the Christian faith, whilst he would leave this country free—a country in which I say, without the slightest fear of contradiction, there was a considerable amount of clerical interference at the last Election. He proposes to leave English Members to the mercy of the Corrupt Practices Act alone. I think hon. Gentlemen will not be surprised if on this occasion we desire to secure for Ireland immunity from a law which will be a scandal and a disgrace to the Statute Book. For these reasons I shall vote against the Motion for leave to introduce the Bill. Another point is that whilst the hon. and gallant Member is anxious to interfere with Parliamentary elections, he does not make the slightest effort to interfere with municipal and other elections. We know there are other elections which are not under the Ballot, and that when we proposed to prevent intimidation or interference with these elections by prescribing the machinery of the Ballot it was the right hon. Gentleman's Party that divided against the Bill. Against what seemed to me the very evident sense of the House, they pressed the matter to a division. I do not think this Bill is a judicious one. It cannot be judicious to detract from a body of clergy against whom nothing has been proved.

MR. DE COBAIN (Belfast, E.): As to extending the measure to Municipal and Poor Law elections, I think my hon. and gallant Friend would have no objection to do that in Committee. He would, I believe, be prepared to extend it to all elections. I would advise him to permit the provisions to be extended to all elections, because, certainly, clerical interference has extended to all elections in

Ireland, and has been by no means confined to Parliamentary contests.

Mr. JOHNS (Warwick, Nuneaton): I beg to say that we have the Corrupt Practices Act, which deals with undue interference. I, therefore, regard the Bill as unnecessary; and unless it is applied to England I shall vote against it.

Question put, and *negatived.*

POLICE FORCES (REMOVAL OF DISABILITIES) BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill for the removal of disabilities of the Police Forces to Vote at Parliamentary Elections in Great Britain."—(*Mr. Tottenham.*)

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): Sir, the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Tottenham) asks leave to bring in a Bill to remove the disabilities of the police in England in respect of Parliamentary Elections; the hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet (Colonel King-Harman) has given Notice of a similar Bill with regard to Ireland, although a Bill of the same nature relating to the two countries has already been brought in by another Member and rejected by the House. I ask, Sir, whether it is in Order for these two hon. Members, by bringing forward their Bills in this way, to act against the Rule of the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no objection to the Motion of the hon. Member on the ground of Order. The Bill to which the hon. Member refers was not defeated on the Motion that it be referred to any Committee; it was upon the Motion that it be postponed to a very distant day. Of course, it is a matter for the discretion of the House whether there should be more than one Bill before the House dealing with the same subject.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Sir, there is a Bill before the House on which the sense of the House has been taken; these Bills are supposed to do the same thing. As you say, Sir, that it lies within the discretion of the House to grant or refuse the introduction of a Bill, I think we are entitled to ask the House to refuse leave to bring in this measure. I point out that it is a great inconvenience and annoyance to hon. Members, after spending already much time in dealing with the subject in one Bill, to have two other Bills brought forward precisely the same in principle, and requiring the same amount of discussion.

Mr. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): Sir, it was with regret that I felt myself compelled to vote for the postponement to a far-off date of the Bill of the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Epping Division of Essex (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson). I voted against him simply because he proposed, against the wish of the vast majority of Irish Members, to enfranchise the Royal Irish Constabulary; and I trust that Irish Members will not now oppose the giving of the vote to a very deserving class of men in Great Britain.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S): Sir, I am sure that we on these Benches desire to observe the wishes of English Members, especially of those who support us; but I wish to point out that there is a difficulty in allowing this Bill to be introduced as a Bill for Great Britain, and then finding that it is to be extended to Ireland. Such a transaction would be distinctly opposed to the law, and certainly to the spirit of Parliamentary Rules. As another argument against the introduction of the Bill, I would point out that there is nothing in the wording of the Bill to prevent this being done here or in "another place," and so, practically, take the consideration of this question out of our hands. We have had such tactics pursued already on this very subject; and I ask the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken to remember that the last Bill was introduced and permitted to pass the second reading on the clear understanding that it would not be extended to Ireland—or that the words "and Ireland" should be struck out, and the operation of the Bill confined to Great Britain. The hon. Gentleman knows very well what is the influence of the Front Opposition Bench in "another place," and what is possible within the Rules of Parliamentary warfare; and I regard the present proceeding as, perhaps, one of those Parliamentary manœuvres which are resorted to more often than they ought to be.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): Sir, I frankly confess that I am against the enfranchisement of the police in England, Ireland, and Wales, If there be anything in the world prejudicial to the country I think it would be the transformation of the Police Forces into political bodies. I am a most earnest admirer of the Institutions of America; but I think the manner in which offices are given in the police for political reasons is a scandal to that country, and I should be very sorry to see the same principle in operation here. We should find hon. Members constantly getting up in this House and asking the Heads of Departments whether or not it is intended to increase the salary of officials in those Departments. I say that this is a question which should be left entirely to the Heads of Departments themselves, who are the only persons who can fairly judge of the amount of remuneration that should be given to public officials; but if you introduce the other principle you bring suspicion on the working of the Departments and their internal management, and therefore I say that to convert the Police Force of Great Britain into a political body would be the degradation of it. But my opposition to the enfranchisement of the Police Force does not rest on this ground alone. We should, if this Bill were passed, undoubtedly find that the Police Force would be used for Tory purposes. ["No, no!"] Why, every Civil servant knows that extravagance is the cry of the Tory Party. Seeing that they live on the public funds they have naturally a very considerable interest in increasing the establishments of the country. I repeat, that to enfranchise the police of any country, whether of England, Ireland, or Scotland, is, instead of making it an impartial body contented with the remuneration given by the Authorities, to transform it into a political body which will be using its interest at elections to get more salary. If this Motion is put I shall certainly vote against it. I warn my hon. Friend to be a little on his guard against so astute a political hand as the hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill. We had, with regard to the other Bill, pledges that it would not be extended to Ireland; but it was only by the exercise of Parliamentary adroitness that we escaped from having the police of Ireland changed into a voting body. Exactly the same course would probably be pursued by the hon. Gentleman in charge of this Bill. I feel sure that when the hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet (Colonel King-Harman) and the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Tottenham) put down their several Motions with regard to the enfranchisement of the police they were acting in concert, and that their object is to get rid by a side-wind of the decision which this House came to 14 days ago—namely, that the 20th of August would be quite early enough to consider this matter with regard to both England and Ireland. I hope that this House will show its determination to keep the Police Forces of the country entirely as non-political bodies, and confine their action to the preservation of law and order.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN (Kent, Isle of Thanet): Sir, as far as my Bill is concerned, I may say that it is put down without concert with any hon. Member, and without reference to any other measure on the Paper. My advice to the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Tottenham) was, that he should allow my Bill alone to remain on the Paper; and I can assure the House, so far as my intention and my action are concerned, that I shall be no party to the introduction of anything relating to Ireland into the Bill as suggested by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway. With regard to this proposal, I cannot see why a class as capable as any in the country should not be allowed to exercise the franchise in the same way as the rest of Her Majesty's subjects.

MR. SEXTON (Sligo, S.): Sir, our position with regard to the Bill is this—we desire that our opinion should prevail with reference to the police of Ireland. On the other hand, we think that the opinion of English Members—especially those for whom we have high respect—should be allowed to prevail with respect to the preliminary stage of the Bill. The hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet (Colonel King-Harman) has, I think, stated his position with great fairness, and he has said that he will be no party to the extension of this Bill to Ireland; and, therefore, considering that the introduction of a Bill does not involve any assent to its principle, but merely implies that the subject may be considered, I am of opinion that we may waive our opposition in the present instance.

Motion *agreed to.*

Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Tottenham, Mr. William Hart Dyke, Sir Julian Goldsmid, Viscount Grimston, Mr. Biddulph, Colonel King-Harman, and Mr. Rylands.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 221.]

PUBLIC PARKS AND WORKS (METROPOLIS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Bill for the transfer, to the Metropolitan Board of Works, and the maintenance of certain Public Parks and Works in the Metropolis, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Leveson Gower.

House adjourned at Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 21*st May*, 1886.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*First Reading*—Contagious Diseases (Animals)* (122).

Committee — Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham) (59-123).

Committee—Report—West Indian Incumbered Estates* (115); British North America (116).

Report—Companies Acts Amendment* (82).

Third Reading—Customs and Inland Revenue (112), and *passed*.

Provisional Order Bill—*Committee—Report*—Local Government (Ireland) (Public Health Act)* (83).

IONIAN BANK BILL.

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Duke of Buckingham*).

Lord SUDELEY said, that the Treasury had very strong objections to Clauses 3 and 4; but as the solicitors had given an undertaking to withdraw these clauses they would not oppose the second reading.

Motion *agreed to*; Bill read 2ª accordingly.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

Viscount HARDINGE, in rising to ask the First Commissioner of Works, Whether any decision had been arrived at with respect to a site for the National Portrait Gallery, said, that in consequence of the fire at South Kensington in July last, and repeated protests on the part of the Trustees as to the insecurity of the building, the Government determined to send the National Portraits to Bethnal Green. This was carried out in August on the understanding that the portraits were to remain there for two years. In the autumn Mr. Plunket, the then First Commissioner, fixed upon a site and prepared plans. Had he remained in Office, in all probability progress would have been made by this time. He was succeeded by the noble Earl who had lately resigned (the Earl of Morley); and now the noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Elgin) had taken his place. He could not see why, because every three months we had a new First Commissioner, the question should be hung up. At the last meeting of the Board, a resolution was proposed by Mr. Stanhope, and seconded by the Earl of Derby, that no delay should take place, and that a Vote on Account should be taken. This was forwarded to the Treasury, and he hoped to have a satisfactory reply from the noble Earl on the subject. The site was a very good one; it was next to the India House, on the vacant space, which was Crown property, so that there would be no expenditure on the score of site. The plans would provide galleries lighted from the top, and would extend from King Street to Delahay Street, with ample room for offices below, and with a handsome façade towards Parliament Street. One advantage of this site would be that when once the Gallery was built there was little chance of the block of buildings between King Street and Parliament Street being allowed to remain. Under these circumstances, he thought any further delay was inexcusable.

The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (The Earl of Elgin), in reply, said, he regretted that he was not in a position to give an answer which the noble Viscount (Viscount Hardinge), who had correctly stated the present position of the matter, would consider satisfactory. The First Commissioner was not absolutely a free agent. He stood between two parties—the Trustees, who were responsible for the custody of the Collection, on the one hand; and, on the other, the Treasury, who had to provide the funds for any building. As their Lordships were aware, the National Portrait Gallery Collection had been removed to the Bethnal Green Museum for safety. As to the future permanent home for the National Portrait Gallery, the Trustees were of opinion that a more central site than the one which the Gallery had occupied should be found; but, as their Lordships were aware, central sites available in London were not very many in number, and were very costly; and that was especially the case with a Picture Gallery, where the necessary provision for light made it impossible to make up for the expense of the surface by the height of the buildings erected thereon. In fact, there were great difficulties in the way of the erection of a National Portrait Gallery on a really central site, and in a building worthy of the occasion, unless it could be done as part of a larger scheme. It was true that there were some plans and sketches before Mr. Plunket; but they were never drawn out very much in detail, and they did not altogether stand on Government property, as stated by the noble Viscount, but involved the taking of a considerable amount of private property, for which large expense would have to be incurred. Their Lordships did not discuss the details of public expenditure; but they must be perfectly aware of the unprecedented demands now made on the public purse, and also of the state of trade and the general condition of the country. No Government at this moment would embark on any scheme which would involve the expenditure of a large sum of money which could not be provided out of the funds at their disposal, or at all without further taxation. The Government recognized fully the necessities of the case, and were determined to deal with it at the first opportunity; but they were obliged to allow this and other matters to remain in abeyance until the general financial condition of the country exhibited some improvement or the extraordinary demands of the Services showed some abatement. There was a special reason why he was unable, with reference to the plan to which the noble Viscount had alluded, to give a definite answer, and that was because the House of Commons had appointed a Committee to investigate a plan already approved for the new Admiralty and War Office, though the names of the Members to serve on the Committee had not yet been approved. He did not know whether they would go into the whole subject; but, if they did, the question might arise as to the sites available to the Government at Whitehall. Therefore, it was impossible for him to contemplate proceeding with a plan which involved the disposal of any of those sites now available. He was extremely sorry that he was obliged to give a reply which the noble Viscount would not consider satisfactory; but the Government recognized fully the necessity of providing, as soon as possible, for the safe and convenient housing of this valuable Collection, and it would be the duty of whoever was First Commissioner to bring the subject under the consideration of the Treasury at the first opportunity.

THE NEW WAR OFFICE AND ADMIRALTY.—QUESTION.

In answer to Viscount SIDMOUTH,

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (The Earl of ELGIN) said, that he understood that a Vote had been taken on account in the other House to defray the expenses of the demolition of the buildings occupying the site on which it had been proposed to erect the new War Office and Admiralty, but that nothing would be done beyond what was absolutely necessary until the Committee of the House of Commons appointed to consider the subject should have issued its Report.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY (DURHAM) BILL.

(*The Lord Bishop of Durham.*)

(NO. 59.) COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to order).

Clause 1 (Premises in which intoxicating liquors are sold to be closed on Sunday).

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK drew attention to the position in which the clause would place members of the North-Eastern Circuit. His attention had been called to the fact that that Circuit held their mess dinner at one of the hotels in the city of Durham on a Sunday; but, under the operation of this Bill, if it were passed in its present form, this would be prevented—the Bar would be prevented from having their dinners on Sundays. He hoped that something would be done to prevent the operation of the Bill having this effect. The mess usually provided their own wine; but even food could not be supplied under the Bill. The Government, he thought, should look into this matter. No doubt, many members of the Bar stayed at the hotel, and they would be all right; but three-fourths of the members of this old Circuit were compelled to find lodgings in the city, and as they would not be *boná fide* travellers, they certainly would not be able to get their dinners at the hotel. He hoped that the members of this old Circuit would still be given the opportunity of meeting together and would not be inconvenienced in this matter, and that the case would have the favourable consideration of the right rev. Prelate in charge of the Bill.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS, who had given Notice to move that the city of Durham be exempted from the operation of the Bill, said, he desired for a few minutes to refer to a point raised by the noble and learned Lord (the Lord Chancellor) the other evening. The noble and learned Lord, in reference to the Petition against the Bill, told them that he happened to take a stray shot at it, with the result that his stray shot had brought down game, inasmuch as he held then in his hand a Petition from a well-known teetotaller, asking that his name might be struck off the Petition, as he had been induced to sign the Petition against the Bill when he thought that he was signing for it. The name of the person was stated to be Mr. Edward Close, of 3, Paradise Street, Durham. He (the Earl of Wemyss) held in his hand a letter from this well-known teetotaller, a gentleman of the mature age of 17, who, in the presence of four witnesses whose names were attached to the letter, said—"The mistake was entirely my own, and no attempt whatever was made to deceive me." In these circumstances, he trusted that the promoters of the Petition would be held quite guiltless of any *mala fides.* With regard to the Amendment of which he had given Notice, he intended not only to ask their Lordships to support it, but he intended to claim the votes of the right rev. Prelate (the Bishop of Durham) and the other occupants of the Episcopal Bench. This he should do solely upon the grounds which had been put forward by the right rev. Prelate who had charge of the Bill. The right rev. Prelate said—

> "He knew there was little chance of their carrying a general Bill dealing with the whole country; and, therefore, he would ask them to deal exceptionally with the question, and he urged that they might well do this where they found a county anxious and even praying their Lordships' House to have all public-houses closed on Sunday."

Upon this principle he asked them now to exempt the city of Durham. Let the promoters of the Bill have the same principle by which they supported the measure applied on the other side. Let the right rev. Prelate and his Friends apply their own principle to the city and town of Durham. On the second reading they were told that out of 16 Members representing the county of Durham 15 were in favour of this measure and one was not. But who was the one Member opposed to it? The Member for the City of Durham (Mr. Milvain), and as he protested against the measure they might be sure that his constituency also objected to it. They were told that Members were guided by the feelings of their constituents; and he had a right to assume, therefore, upon the argument of the supporters, that the majority of the inhabitants of the city of Durham were opposed to the Bill. He did not think the right rev. Prelate would deny that the inhabitants of Durham City had wholly repudiated the Bill, and would have nothing to do with it. But this he could assure the right rev. Prelate—that a Petition was being promoted against the Bill, and he had expected that it would have been in time for him to present it that evening. It had, however, been very numerously signed. But if there was any doubt on this question, there was more positive evidence of the state of feeling. On Monday last a great mass meeting was held in the Market Place at Durham to protest against it. There were between 5,000 and 6,000 people present. The utmost enthusiasm prevailed, and the object of the gathering was to protest against legislation which would shut up public-houses on Sunday. They passed resolutions opposed to the Bill as a most unwarrantable interference with the rights of individuals, and as promoting piecemeal legislation. A rev. gentleman, who, perhaps, was chaplain of the right rev. Prelate, and some of his friends, were present at the meeting, but were so hustled that they were compelled to take refuge in the Town Hall. That was the state of feeling on the Monday. On the Tuesday, not discouraged by what had taken place on the Monday, the supporters of the Bill summoned a meeting by handbill for that day, and from the tone of those handbills he was not surprised at the result. They certainly were not likely to tend to the peace of the meeting. He would read to the House from the published reports an account of the proceedings, from which their Lordships would see that the speakers were quite inaudible, owing to the noise and singing that went on, and that, finally, the speakers themselves were compelled to beat a hasty retreat amid a shower of rotten eggs and other unsavoury articles. They were told that the chairman declared the resolution carried; but no one heard it put to the meeting, and if it had been no one would have known what they were asked to vote about. The promoters, again, were compelled to seek refuge from the hustling of the crowd. These were the grounds upon which he requested the votes of the right rev. Prelate and the other occupants of the Episcopal Bench in exempting the city of Durham from the operation of the Bill. The resolution which the chairman of the second meeting declared to be carried stated that this meeting protested against the exemption of the city of Durham from the provisions of the Durham Sunday Closing Bill, on the ground that it was exceptional legislation and an undue interference with individual liberty. This was the ground taken up by all those who objected to the measure, and he asked the right rev. Prelate to support his Amendment, which was thoroughly in accord with the strong public feeling in the city of Durham. He asked them to avoid the possibility of such scandals as those meetings which had taken place in the town. He was of opinion that the feeling now aroused would continue if the Bill were passed and Durham not exempted from its operation, because, do whatever they would, they could not prevent the minority—and there would be a large minority—feeling that these laws were unjust infringements of an Englishman's privilege, and they would do their best to avoid and prevent these measures which were opposed to their liberties and instincts being passed.

Amendment *moved*,

In page 1, line 11, after ("In,") insert ("all parts of,") and after ("Durham,") insert ("except the city of Durham.")—(*The Earl of Wemyss.*)

THE EARL OF RAVENSWORTH said, he was probably more closely interested in the city of Durham than any other Peer present. He was sorry he could not support the Amendment of his noble Friend (the Earl of Wemyss), but that he must give his strongest opposition to it on the same grounds as he opposed the measure itself. He did not believe there was anything like a unanimous feeling in the county in favour of Sunday closing. The principle of the Bill had been referred to, and he would say that his objections to it were that it was exceptional and one-sided, and that it must necessarily create grievous anomalies and much injustice, as it was surrounded by counties which were not subject to the same legislation. His noble Friend desired to create an anomaly within an anomaly. Let them look at the question of population. In Durham there was a population of 15,000; the population of Gateshead was nearly five times that; and if they exempted Durham how could they help exempting Gateshead and South Shields, and the other large towns in the county such as Stockton and Darlington? The Amendment would create an anomaly within an anomaly even more grievous than the anomaly of the exceptional Bill itself. The city of Durham had had a very long life, and in its historical and ecclesiastical traditions it stood second to none in the Kingdom; and as a magistrate and resident in the county, he objected to the city being made a drinking centre of the whole county. He believed that opinion was very much divided on the subject, and he showed that by giving his vote against the second reading. He hoped that the noble Earl would not receive any large amount of support on his Amendment. He regretted to disagree with the noble Earl, because he went entirely with many of his arguments, and detested the unnecessary interference with liberty of which he had spoken. He was perfectly convinced that by that kind of piecemeal legislation they would encourage rather than check the very evil they wished to eradicate. The people beyond its frontiers would go from Durham to other counties, and those counties would suffer from increased Sunday drinking.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL) said, as the noble Earl (the Earl of Wemyss) had referred to his connection with Durham, he would like to make a few remarks. He admitted that the opponents of the Bill had brought forward strong arguments; but strong arguments could also be adduced on the other side. He had never sought to depreciate the strength of the opposition, but was strongly of opinion that, if the Bill passed at all, it ought to pass without any such exception as that proposed; he would rather see the measure rejected altogether. His noble Friend (the Earl of Wemyss) said that they were dealing exceptionally with the county, and they might as well deal exceptionally with that portion of the county. He was not sure that the county would be in an exceptional position for long; other counties would adopt the measure if it proved, on the whole, to be advantageous, as he believed it would. They might as well propose to exempt a single street. Exceptions of that sort would be absolutely impossible, and would make the measure ridiculous. His noble Friend wanted to make it ridiculous—he was perfectly aware of that. An absolute and complete opposition to the Bill, its entire destruction, would be far better, and would serve its opponents' ends better than the Amendment. He was not prepared to admit that the city of Durham viewed the matter in a different light to other parts of the county. His noble Friend said the city of Durham was opposed to the Bill; if that were so, it must have changed its views, for when he declared that he was going to vote for the Bill it elected him by a great majority to represent it. But what was the evidence of the change? The public meetings had been referred to. It was a remarkable fact that there were no such meetings before the question came before their Lordships' House, and his noble Friend had denounced it as an infringement of the rights of Her Majesty's subjects. The Bill had been before the country for years; it had passed through the House of Commons, and there were no meetings against it. It was not before it had been opposed in this House and narrowly escaped defeat that such meetings were held. What was the origin of those meetings? Spontaneous exhibition of public feeling? He was not perfectly satisfied of that. Reference had been made to a Petition got up by the Brewers' Association, which said that the effect of the Bill would be to diminish the drinking on Sunday; but it was a little inconsistent with the argument also used against the Bill that it would not diminish the consumption of drink at all, but would lead to drinking in another form. Had not the meeting a somewhat similar origin? Knowing the inhabitants of Durham as he did, he declined to accept the people who received the speakers with rotten eggs, and would not hear them, as the true representatives of the city. It was not such people whom he had the honour of representing, and when he was the Representative of the city people did not exhibit their sentiments in such a way as that. He declined to accept the decision of that meeting as the public opinion of the city. It was perfectly easy to get hundreds together. [The Earl of WEMYSS: Thousands.] Thousands was easily said, but he knew the size of the market place, and he doubted very much if there were 5,000 or 6,000 people there. The whole population of the city was only 15,000, and, that being so, the meeting might be taken to represent the minority throughout the county, and not in the city alone. One could easily understand how such meetings could be got up, and it was not difficult to see what the origin of this meeting had been from their behaviour. A resolution was passed at the meeting, and the source from which that resolution came must be patent to everybody. It was almost word for word taken from a pamphlet presented to each Member of the House, and issued by the Liberty and Property Defence League, of which the noble Earl was so prominent a member. For his own part, he certainly would not admit that this meeting represented the views of the city of Durham. When one considered that the city had only 15,000 inhabitants, and that the population of the county was 900,000, it was a very strong indication of the feeling with regard to the Bill, and of the favour with which it was received, that out of a population of 900,000 his noble Friend only suggested that there were some 15,000 who desired to be exempted from its operation. He trusted that, whatever might be done on the third reading, the Amendment would not be agreed to, and that the city of Durham would not be excepted from the action of the Bill.

LORD BRAMWELL said, the House had read the Bill a second time, and confirmed whatever was the principle of it; but he could not understand the principle under which that part of the country between the Tees, the sea, and the Tyne, was to have no more drink sold on Sunday within it. If it was the principle of fulfilling the wishes of the majority, there was no doubt that the majority of the inhabitants of the city were opposed to the Bill. He had no doubt of that, not because of the foolish mob which misbehaved itself, although that was rather a reason why their desire should be granted, for who could doubt that after the debate yesterday that a little lawlessness was an aid to legislation. That majority had shown by its vote in behalf of the Gentleman who represented them in the House of Commons that they disapproved of the Bill for the city. He was in a difficulty in the matter. He had a letter from the Member for the City (Mr. Milvain), in which he said—

> "I understand an Amendment is proposed to exclude the city of Durham from the operation of this Bill. If so, I would humbly beg that it be not persisted in, for, while regretting the additional drunkenness which must necessarily accrue on the borders of Northumberland and Yorkshire, I would not like to see the cathedral city the scene of such drunkenness if such Amendment were carried into law."

That was a very natural desire on his part; he would like Durham drunkenness to be spread fairly over the county. His noble and learned Friend (the Lord Chancellor) said that the Petition had been got up by the country brewers, and that it did not show that they thought the Bill would not put a stop to drinking. He inferred that they did think it would put a stop to the drinking of beer, because gin and other spirits would be drunk instead. Under all these circumstances, he felt considerable difficulty in voting for the Amendment of his noble Friend (the Earl of Wemyss). The hon. Gentleman who wrote to him also put in a word for the North-Eastern Circuit, that they might not go dinnerless on Sunday. He was not sure that they were not *bonâ fide* travellers, but did not know what would happen to them or the publicans if they opened the doors of their houses. Perhaps his noble and learned Friend in his zeal for the city of Durham would also have some consideration for the Circuit which he so admirably and ably led for some time.

THE BISHOP OF DURHAM (Dr. LIGHTFOOT) said, perhaps he could throw a little light on the meeting at Durham. The population of the city of Durham was 15,000, and there were 114 places for the sale of intoxicating drink, or one to every 131 of the population. The fact, however, to which he particularly wished to call their attention, was that 64 of these were within a radius of a quarter of a mile from the market place, where the meeting in question was held. They knew what the effect was upon people of those beverages which, in deference to the noble and learned Lord, he would not call intoxicating but fortifying; and if the meeting had been somewhat unruly it was no more than was to be expected. He protested, however, against such behaviour being considered a type of the conduct of the good orderly people of Durham; and if their behaviour was not a type, why should their opinions be taken to represent the opinions of Durham? The statistics all went the other way. Three years ago there was a house-to-house canvass, and the result was that 1,449 householders voted in favour of a Sunday Closing Bill, 201 were neutral, and 857 were blank, or not returned at all. This day he had presented to their Lordships two Petitions in favour of the measure, one of which was signed by the clergy of the Church of England, by Roman Catholic clergy, and Nonconformists of divers denominations. The signatures represented every single parish but one—in which there was not a single public-house—and every religious denomination. The other Petition was signed by 1,800 inhabitants of Durham, and had been got out within the last four days, for it was only late on Saturday night that Durham awoke to the fact that exceptional treatment was contemplated in its case. The noble Earl (the Earl of Wemyss) had claimed his vote; but he had a greater claim to the vote of the noble Earl.

The noble Earl objected to the Bill that it was piecemeal; he objected to the noble Earl's Amendment that it was atomic. There were seven or eight towns in Durham the population of which was considerably larger than that of the city of Durham—the population of Sunderland, for instance, was eight or nine times as great—and he could not see on what ground Durham should be excepted. He had endeavoured, during the few days that had elapsed since the second reading, to find out if he were really mistaken when he said that the general mass of working men in the county were in favour of the Bill. Through his clergy, who had ample opportunities of learning the truth, evidence had been volunteered to him from various quarters, and his deliberate conviction was that the great mass of the artizans and working men of Durham were strongly in favour of the Bill.

The Earl of ONSLOW said, he voted with considerable diffidence for the Bill on the second reading, and the discussion which had taken place tonight showed how very difficult it was for their Lordships sitting in London, and unacquainted with the locality, to enter upon that class of piecemeal legislation. It was because he thought a distinct opinion had been expressed by the inhabitants of the city of Durham, or a certain proportion of them, that they should not have that legislation thrust upon them, that, notwithstanding the vote he gave on the second reading, he should support the noble Earl (the Earl of Wemyss).

The Bishop of LONDON (Dr. Temple) said, the Bill as introduced was to prevent Sunday drinking without any limit whatever; but the Amendment which the right rev. Prelate in charge of the Bill (the Bishop of Durham) had put down on the Paper would limit its operation to four years. That reduced the Bill to an experiment, and he ventured to suggest that if they were to try an experiment they should do it thoroughly; it was no use to try a partial experiment. If the Bill were to operate for four years only, it was absurd to spoil what they were going to do beforehand. If the city were exempted, and the Bill failed, the promoters would say that that was due to the exemption of the city; if it succeeded, the opponents of the Bill would say it was due to the exemption of the city; and so there would be no satisfactory result either way. The proposal to throw the Bill out on the third reading was on a very different footing, and he could understand the noble Earl (the Earl of Wemyss) asking their Lordships to rescind the vote of the other night; but he thought it would be a great mistake if they were to legislate in the form now proposed and adopt the Amendment.

The Earl of WEMYSS said, it was clear, upon the face even of the statistics which the right rev. Prelate (the Bishop of Durham) had quoted, that there was a large minority whose rights required protection, and he hoped they would receive attention.

On Question, *disagreed to.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 2 *agreed to.*

Clause 3 (Commencement of Act).

Amendment *moved*, in page 1, line 18, leave out from ("on") to the end of the clause, and insert—

"(The eleventh day of October next, and shall, unless otherwise determined by Parliament, expire on the first day of July one thousand eight hundred and ninety.")—(*The Lord Bishop of Durham.*)

Amendment *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Remaining Clauses *agreed to.*

The Report of the Amendments to be received on *Monday* next; and Bill to be *printed* as amended. (No. 123.)

CUSTOMS AND INLAND REVENUE BILL.

(*The Lord Sudeley.*)

(NO. 112.) THIRD READING.

Order of the Day for the Third Reading read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3^a."—(*The Lord Sudeley.*)

Lord STANLEY of ALDERLEY asked whether it would be lawful under this Bill for a man who brewed without having a licence to give away any of the beer he so brewed for domestic purposes? Because, if so, it would be to establish a drinking shop in every hamlet, for a return could be made for beer without its being possible to prove that something in the nature of payment had been given. If this clause meant anything, and should have any effect, and come into general operation, it would reduce the Revenue, and cause an outcry from the Licensed Victuallers, and would have to be repealed, and then poor people would suffer by having to sacrifice their brewing apparatus, after having been at the expense of obtaining it.

Lord BRAMWELL (in the absence of the Lord Chancellor) said, that no doubt if a man gave away beer colourably he would be committing a breach of the Act. A clause of the Bill provided that in the case of a brewer—

> "Who shall be an occupier of a house of an annual value not exceeding £8, and shall brew beer solely for his own domestic use, no licence shall be required."

If a person coming within the limits of that clause should give away gratuitously the beer which he brewed he would not be committing a breach of the section; but if he really in truth bargained for a return, then it would be open to the authorities to say that he did not brew solely for domestic use, but for other purposes, and consequently he would require a licence.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 3ª accordingly, and *passed.*

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA BILL.

(*The Earl Granville.*)

(NO. 116.) COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to order).

In reply to the Earl of Carnarvon,

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Earl Granville) said, that the Bill gave representation to certian territories which were not included in any Provinces of the Dominion of Canada.

Bill *reported,* without Amendment; and to be read 3ª on *Monday* next.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) BILL. [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act, 1878 — Was *presented* by The Lord President; read 1ª. (No. 122.)

House adjourned at Six o'clock,
to Monday next, a quarter
before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 21*st May,* 1886.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills — *Ordered — First Reading* — Friendly Societies Act (1875) Amendment * [228].

First Reading—Public Parks and Works (Metropolis) * [227].

Second Reading—Government of Ireland [181] [*Fifth Night*], *debate further adjourned;* Cottagers' Allotment Gardens [186], *debate adjourned.*

Withdrawn—Police Forces Enfranchisement * [3].

Provisional Order Bills — *Ordered — First Reading*—Local Government (Gas) * [222]; Local Government (No. 3) * [223]; Local Government (No. 4) * [224]; Local Government (County Divisions) * [225].

First Reading — Local Government (Ireland) (Fermoy) * [226].

QUESTIONS.

NAVY — H.M.S. "COLLINGWOOD" — BURSTING OF THE 43-TON GUN.

Captain PRICE (Devonport) asked the Surveyor General of Ordnance, Whether he has been made aware of a warning, stated by Colonel Hope, V.C. to have been given by him to the First Lord of the Admiralty, as to the probable result of firing the 43-ton guns on board the *Collingwood;* and, whether, considering the accurate knowledge which Colonel Hope appears to have with regard to the nature of these guns, he will consider the advisability of placing him on the promised Committee of Inquiry as to the causes of the recent failure?

Mr. CARBUTT (Monmouth, &c.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is a fact that the Committee of Inquiry into the cause of the bursting of the 43-ton gun, which is one of our newest designs, is entirely and only composed of the Ordnance Committee and the Ordnance Select Committee; whether the Ordnance Committee is responsible for the design of this gun, which was intended to fire 400 lbs. of powder, but has burst with a charge of only 221½ lbs; and, whether he will consider the propriety of appointing an independent instead of a Departmental Committee, or at least add one member who is connected neither with the Department nor a gun manufacturer?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL OF ORDNANCE (Mr. WOODALL) (Hanley): Yes, Sir. The letters addressed by Colonel Hope to the Admiralty referred to by the hon. and gallant Member have been forwarded to the War Office. The House has been already informed by the Secretary of State for War that the inquiry into the causes of the accident on board the *Collingwood* has been intrusted to the Ordnance Committee with associated members as specially constituted last year. Colonel Hope has expressed his willingness to serve upon the Committee of Inquiry; but it has not been thought expedient to reconstruct the Committee for the purpose of including Colonel Hope, though he will be invited to place his views in evidence before it, and they will have careful consideration. In reply to the Question of my hon. Friend the Member for the Monmouth District, I have to say that the names of the members and associated members of the Committee were stated on the 17th instant, in answer to the hon. Member for Great Yarmouth (Sir Henry Tyler). It is not, as I have explained, considered desirable to add to the Committee; but the evidence of any competent witness who can throw light on the gun's failure will be readily accepted. As to the responsibility of the Ordnance Committee for the design of the gun, the gun was designed before the present Ordnance Committee was appointed.

MR. CARBUTT wanted to know, not the names of the Committee, but whether the Committee was the Ordnance Committee and the Ordnance Select Committee; in other words, whether the same gentlemen who designed this gun were to sit in judgment?

MR. WOODALL: No. The members of the Ordnance Committee are not responsible for the designing of the gun; but it is practically the same Committee as reported on these particular guns last year. It is felt to be respectful to that Committee and expedient to ask them to reconsider the whole subject in the light of the accident. The Secretary of State will then consider what course it is expedient to take on that Report.

MR. CARBUTT: Who is responsible for the designing of these guns?

MR. WOODALL replied, that the responsibility for the designs, no doubt, rested with a former Committee on Ordnance; but they were subsequently approved by the Ordnance Committee last year, assisted by specially associated members for the purpose of giving additional force and weight to their recommendations.

WAR DEPARTMENT—MANUFACTURE OF GUNS.

SIR JOHN KENNAWAY (Devon, Honiton) asked the Secretary of State for War, If he has yet nominated the promised Committee to inquire into the manufacture of Guns; and, if not, when he will do so?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): No promise has been made to appoint a Committee to inquire into the manufacture of guns; but, some time ago, I stated in the House that it seemed to me desirable to have an inquiry by an independent Committee into the mode in which the Manufacturing Departments of the Army are administered—and I am now engaged in arranging for its appointment.

MINES REGULATION ACT—WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

MR. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the police in the Ormskirk Division of Lancashire, to whom the county authorities depute the duty of inspecting weights and measures, have not examined the weights and scales used at collieries, by which the quantity of coal raised by miners and their wages are ascertained, on the ground that such machines not being for use in sales to the general public, they do not come within the scope of their duties; whether such omission to inspect prevails in other mining districts; and, will he cause steps to be taken to inform the local authorities that the weights and scales used for the purpose of ascertaining colliers' wages are, by the Mines Regulation Act, placed under the inspection provided by the Weights and Measures Act, in the same manner as weights and scales used for general purposes of sale?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I would remind the hon. Member, with regard to the first part of his Question, that the Weights and Measures Act is administered by the Board of Trade, and so any information as to the manner in which it is carried out would be in the possession of that Department, and not of the Home Office. I can only say that by Section 19 of the Mines Act, 1872, and by the amending Bill, of which I have given Notice, the Weights and Measures Act is applied to weights used at collieries in the same way as to weights used for the sale of any article. If there has been any irregularity in the administration of the Act the proper way would be for the manager of the colliery or the check-weigher to make a representation to the Inspector of Weights and Measures, who, as a public officer, is bound to give attention to the matter.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—PROMOTION.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it is the fact that Inspector Cowman, of the Dublin Mounted Metropolitan Police is to be compulsorily retired after thirty years' service; can he state how many Protestants and how many Catholics have been promoted into his troop of twenty men since Mr. Harrel was made Commissioner; is it the case that a junior Sergeant, who is a Protestant, has now been placed in charge of the troop during Inspector Cowman's absence over two Catholic Officers of much longer standing; and, has this junior Sergeant been drilled at the Royal Military Barracks; and, was this done with a view to making him eligible for promotion over men of twelve and eight years' longer service?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, Inspector Cowman had had over 30 years' service, and was entitled to a pension equal to full pay. He had expressed his intention to retire next August; but Mr. Harrel, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, for a very obvious reason, thought a man being under notice did not conduce to his authority in the Force; and, having regard to the further fact that the Inspector would not lose any pay by immediate retirement, intimated to him that it was expedient his resignation should take place at once. Thereupon Cowman sent in his resignation. What happened then was that the Commissioner appointed a Board of officers to consider who should be placed in charge of the troop. That Board consisted of five members, all of them Catholics. After discussing the merits of every man's service who claimed to be considered, the Board unanimously recommended Sergeant Chase, the junior sergeant, who was a Protestant. In this recommendation the Commissioners concurred. Mr. Harrell had informed him (Mr. Morley) that since he took charge of the Force seven men had been appointed to fill vacancies in the mounted troop; of them four were Catholics and three Protestants. But Mr. Harrel assured him that he was unaware of the religion of any of them until he was obliged to ask for the information to enable him to furnish an answer to this Question.

MR. T. M. HEALY asked if the right hon. Gentleman would give the names of the officers on the Board?

MR. JOHN MORLEY said, they were officers of the Force; but the fact remained that, being Catholics, they appointed this Protestant.

BRITISH COMMERCIAL INTERESTS ABROAD—DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR REPRESENTATIVES.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, How many British and Irish Chambers of Commerce have responded to the invitations he stated on the 8th of March had been issued by the Foreign Office to submit suggestions as to the manner in which the services of Her Majesty's Diplomatic and Consular Officers could be turned to the best advantage for the promotion of British trade abroad, and the opening up of new markets; what is the general tenor of the views expressed; if fresh instructions in accordance therewith have been, or are about to be, issued; and, if the wishes of the Chambers of Commerce in the Colonial and Indian dominions of the Empire will also be sought upon this subject of Imperial importance?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. BRYCE) (Aberdeen, S.): Answers have been already received to the Circular issued by the Foreign Office from the Association of Chambers of Commerce of the United Kingdom, which represents 64 Chambers, and also from the Chambers of Manchester and Glasgow, and the Paris British Chamber of Commerce, as well as from the Chamber of Shipping of the United Kingdom, the Iron Trade Association, and the Association of Agricultural Engineers. I have more than once stated in this House and elsewhere that the Foreign Office would be glad to receive suggestions from any Bodies or persons who are interested in the question. It would be impossible within the limits of an answer to sum up the general tenour of the views expressed; but I may say that the whole subject, which is large and complex, has been, and is still, engaging the earnest attention of the Foreign Office, and it is our hope shortly to arrive at conclusions on the subject which will meet the wishes of the commercial classes. The Foreign Office is not in communication with the Chambers of Commerce of India and the Colonies, and my hon. Friend will, perhaps, address his Question to those of my Colleagues who represent the Departments concerned with those parts of Her Majesty's Dominions.

Mr. HUTTON: Will the hon. Gentleman present to the House Copies of the replies received?

Mr. BRYCE: That is a Question we are still considering, and before long I hope to be able to make a statement on the subject.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

Sir BERNHARD SAMUELSON (Oxfordshire, Banbury) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, Whether he is aware that efficient rudimentary instruction in the use of tools for working in wood and iron is now given in several elementary schools; and, whether he will direct that such instruction shall be included in the list of specific subjects for which a grant may be earned, as recommended by the Royal Commission on Technical Instruction?

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir Lyon Playfair) (Leeds, S.): In most foreign countries, and in some of the larger towns of the United Kingdom, instruction in the use of tools is given in the higher elementary schools. But the cost of the instruction in the use of tools has hitherto in this country been defrayed out of private sources. It might, perhaps, be possible to draw up a curriculum or scheme for such instruction, so as to bring it within Article 16 of the Code. Still, such instruction, apart from practical work and practical results, would be comparatively useless; and the existing Inspectors of Elementary Schools are not fitted to examine in such subjects. I am, therefore, disposed to think that instruction in the use of tools, which is, in fact, a part of technical instruction, would belong to the Science and Art Department. A Motion is before the House as to the extent to which the State will aid technical instruction. When the House has expressed its opinion on this subject, I will submit for the decision of Her Majesty's Government the expediency of aiding elementary schools through the Department of Science and Art, because increased Votes would be necessary, owing to the increasing favour which is now shown to this kind of instruction.

Mr. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, Whether he intends including Ireland in his recommendation to the Lords of the Treasury that grants be made in aid of buildings for local Science and Art Schools, in accordance with the Report of Royal Commission on Technical Instruction; and, whether he is aware that an effort is now being made in Dublin to establish there a Central Technical School, but with the difficulty that adequate funds are not available for the purpose?

Sir LYON PLAYFAIR: The recommendation of the Royal Commission on Technical Education in regard to aid of buildings for local Science and Art Schools includes Ireland as well as Great Britain, and the attention of the Lords of the Treasury will be directed to both. I am aware that an effort is being made in Dublin to establish a central technical school.

INLAND NAVIGATION AND DRAINAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIVER BANN.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, When may the farmers of Derry and Antrim hope that the navigation works on the Bann will, in accordance with the recommendation of the Royal Commission, be so altered or removed as to put a stop to the destructive flooding now taking place?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): Under the existing law, Government has no power to take any initiative in the way of altering or removing the Bann navigation works. Under section 29 of the Act 19 & 20 *Vict.* c. 62, it is possible for five or more ratepayers to move the Lord Lieutenant to enforce proper maintenance on the part of the Navigation Trustees, and in such case the Treasury might, on the same being signified to them by the Lord Lieutenant, direct the Commissioners of Public Works to execute the necessary works, the expenses being afterwards recovered from the baronies or townlands liable for the expenses of the navigation. No such local action, however, has been taken, and therefore the Treasury cannot take any initiative in the matter. I may add that, as the difficulty arises from the existence of separate Drainage and Navigation Boards with conflicting interests, the Treasury would look with favour upon a proposal to consolidate by legislation the two Boards, with a view to arriving at an understanding as to whether, having regard to the interests of drainage, the navigation works can be maintained.

MR. T. M. HEALY asked if the hon. Gentleman was aware that the Lord Lieutenant had several times been applied to by the farmers without obtaining any redress?

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER said, he had no information as to what Memorials had been presented to the Lord Lieutenant upon the subject. The Commissioners could only act upon the direction of the Lord Lieutenant. He would consider the other matter.

MERCHANT SHIPPING — WRECK OF THE BARQUE "CARTWELL."

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, If it is true that the barque *Cartwell*, of Glasgow, became a total wreck on the Cork Harbour Rock on the night of the 18th March 1886; whether the rock is about a quarter of a mile from Roches Point; whether a portion of the crew of the *Cartwell* were rescued by the coastguards from Roches Point, and whether the delay entailed by their having to drag their boat over a rough rocky beach, there being no boatslip or pier, made them nearly too late to save the lives of the shipwrecked sailors; whether Roches Point is largely made use of by pilots, watermen, and fishermen, who complain constantly of the want of a pier or suitable landing place, and whether the Admiralty will confer with the Board of Works, and assist in promoting the construction of a pier, a boat harbour, or a boatslip; whether he is aware that fifty-seven inhabitants of the coastguard station are without any fresh water in summer except such as can be gathered in wet weather from the roofs of the houses; whether the Admiralty will endeavour to provide a remedy for this want; and, whether a Report from the official sanitary officer dealing with the subject can be supplied to this House?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. R. W. DUFF) (Banffshire) (who replied): The circumstances of the case are very much as stated by the hon. Member for Cork. A portion of the crew of the barque *Cartwell* were rescued by the Coastguard from Roche's Point, which is rather more than a quarter of a mile from Cork Harbour Rock. They were only just in time, as the boat with the shipwrecked men was drifting out to sea in a thick fog. Roche's Point is largely made use of by pilot and sailing boats. No complaint has been made of the want of a pier or suitable landing place, though no doubt such a structure would be of general service. With regard to the water supply, I have nothing to add to the reply I gave to the hon. Member on March 25 last.

NAVY (ARMAMENT, &c.)—THE 43-TON GUN.

MR. CARBUTT (Monmouth, &c.) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, What new orders have been issued to Captains of Ships since the bursting of the 43-ton gun; and, whether it is true, as is reported, that the Captains of some of our Ships have received orders not to fire their guns unless in the presence of an enemy?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. HIBBERT) (Oldham): No new orders have been issued since the *Collingwood* accident except to the captain of Her Majesty's ship *Colossus*, who has been directed to suspend target practice from the 43-ton guns of that ship for the present.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—UNION AMALGAMATION.

Mr. MARUM (Kilkenny, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to the protest of the Board of Guardians of the Union of Urlingford to the proposed anomalous areas of the new Unions sought to be constituted in lieu of the present ones comprising the Unions of Abbeyleix, Donaghmore, Roscrea, and Urlingford, upon the amalgamation scheme sanctioned by the Local Government Board; whether it is not the fact that the divisions of Kyle and Errill, proposed to be added to Abbeyleix and Roscrea Unions are a mean distance of only some five miles from the Urlingford Workhouse, although the distance of same divisions ranges from twelve to sixteen miles from the Abbeyleix and Roscrea Workhouses; and, whether he will cause a reconsideration of the amalgamation scheme in these respects?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne), in reply, said, that this matter required further consideration, and they were not yet able to give a final decision.

Mr. SEXTON (Sligo, S.) asked whether, in the present position of the question of Local Government in Ireland, it would not be expedient to postpone this measure, which was not urgent, which was opposed by the local ratepayers, and which was proposed by a State Department?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY said, that whether the time was long or short, as long as the present arrangement existed it should be carried out.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—SCHOOLS ON THE CONTINENT—MR. MATTHEW ARNOLD'S REPORT.

Sir HENRY HOLLAND (Hampstead) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, Whether Mr. Matthew Arnold, who was sent by the Education Department to report upon the Schools in Germany, and elsewhere on the continent, has presented his Report; and, whether it can be laid upon the Table of the House and distributed to Members before the Education Vote is taken?

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir Lyon Playfair) (Leeds, S.): Mr. Arnold's Report was received yesterday, and I will lay it on the Table to-night. There may be a little delay in issuing it, as certain tables have not yet been given in, and the proofs have to be sent to the United States, as Mr. Arnold has left England. I will do my best to hasten the issue of the Report, which is already in the hands of the printers.

Sir HENRY HOLLAND asked whether the Report could not be laid before the House without waiting for the tables?

Sir LYON PLAYFAIR said, he would consider that suggestion.

SALMON AND FRESHWATER FISHERIES—TRANSFER TO THE BOARD OF TRADE.

Mr. PORTMAN (Dorsetshire, N.) asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether the proposed transfer of authority in the matter of salmon and freshwater fisheries from the Home Office to the Board of Trade will in any way affect the status and authority of Boards of Conservators in England?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Mundella) (Sheffield, Brightside) (who replied) said: No, Sir; the proposed transfer of authority in the matter of salmon and freshwater fisheries from the Home Office to the Board of Trade will not in any way affect the *status* and authority of Boards of Conservators in England.

Mr. PORTMAN asked whether the Committee stage could be postponed until after Whitsuntide?

Mr. MUNDELLA replied in the negative. It was important that the transfer should take place as quickly as possible.

POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS—MILITARY BANDS.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether his attention has been called to the presence of the band of one of Her Majesty's Regiments of Guards at a meeting held on Wednesday last in the Haymarket Opera House, by the "Grand Habitation of the Primrose League," an Association which it is understood exists for party objects, and at which meeting party speeches were made by the Marquess of Salisbury and others; and, whether, in view of the fact that regimental bands consist of enrolled soldiers, receiving pay and clad in the uniform of the regiment to which they belong, he will take steps to prevent henceforward their presence at party demonstrations?

Mr. COOTE (Huntingdon, S.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the Question, I wish to ask him whether his answer will equally apply to bands connected with Her Majesty's Militia with regard to attending political demonstrations in the country districts?

Sir HERBERT MAXWELL (Wigton): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the Question, perhaps I may be allowed to ask him whether there is a notable precedent for the practice of Militia bands attending political demonstrations; and whether it is not in his recollection that in 1882, at a large meeting of the Liberal Party, held in the Westminster Aquarium, the band of Her Majesty's Household Troops did attend?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) (Stirling, &c.): I am not aware of that. My memory does not retain the fact. I can only answer the Question put to me by the hon. Member for Northampton. In answer to my hon. Friend, I have to say that the Queen's Regulations, Section VI., paragraph 9, lay down that—

> "Officers, non-commissioned officers, and private soldiers are forbidden to institute or take part in any meetings, demonstrations, or processions for Party or political purposes, in barracks, quarters, or camps or in their vicinity, and never when in uniform."

The Question of my hon. Friend only appeared on the Paper this morning, and I have not been able to ascertain, by communication with the officers commanding the Guards regiments, whether one of their bands was present on the occasion referred to. Assuming, however, that the fact is as stated, I have then to inquire into the nature of this so-called Primrose League; and I regret to say that I am without any definite information on the subject. There is, however, an organization in Ireland called the Orange Society, in whose demonstrations it would be most improper and contrary to rule for bands to take part; and, if I were to judge from the relation of the two colours, I should conjecture that this Primrose League was somewhat similar to the Orange Society, only more sickly and effeminate in tone. At all events, if there was anything political in the meeting referred to, I agree with my hon. Friend that no band of a regiment in the Queen's Service ought to have attended it.

NAVY — CONTRACTS FOR CRUISERS WITH PRIVATE BUILDERS.

Mr. JACKS (Leith, &c.) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, with reference to the two war ships ordered in Belfast, If he would inform the House if at the time these orders were given there were many builders, experienced in the building of war ships, ready to tender for the ships in question and build them under contract; if the builders to whom the contract was given have had experience in the building of modern war ships; if the Government, before giving the order or since, had or have compared the cost of merchant ships built without contract by this firm with the cost of similar merchant ships built by other builders under contract; if the Government have any undertaking that these two vessels will not exceed a certain maximum sum; and, how this sum compares with the tenders of other builders; or, in the absence of such an undertaking, if the Government has made any definite calculation or has any certain expectation as to what the cost will be?

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Hibbert) (Oldham): I went very fully into this matter in the answer I gave to my hon. Friend on the 11th instant. I have only now to add that there was considerable competition for the construction of the ships referred to. Messrs. Harland and Wolff have had experience in the construction of war vessels, having previously built two such vessels for the Admiralty. It is quite impossible to say whether the arrangements made by the late Government with the firm in question will be a success from a financial point of view until the ships have been actually completed. No undertaking has been given that their cost will not exceed a certain maximum sum; but the Government does not anticipate that the result will compare unfavourably with the cost of similar vessels built by tender.

Mr. JACKS asked whether the right hon. Gentleman had any objection to say what consideration weighed with the Government in inducing them to give the contracts to comparatively inexperienced builders in this class of vessel, when experienced builders were quite prepared to take the contract?

MR. HIBBERT said, that this matter was arranged by the late Government; but, so far as he could understand the question, looking at the Papers, he thought they were perfectly justified in trying the experiment of building the vessels upon the terms agreed upon.

THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL DEBATE.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): Sir, I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government, Whether it is the intention of the Government to ask for a Vote on Account on Monday; and, whether the report which has reached me is accurate, that it is proposed for that purpose to place Supply as the first Order on Monday, instead of following the general practice of taking such a Vote at a late hour in the evening, and thus avoiding the inconvenience that would attend the interruption of the debate on the Government of Ireland Bill? I would also ask the right hon. Gentleman, whether he has made any further inquiry as to the probable duration of the debate on the Government of Ireland Bill; and, if so, with what result? I would venture to repeat what I said the other day, that there is every desire on the part of those who sit in this quarter of the House, even at the risk of sacrificing their opportunity of taking part in that debate, to assist the Government in arriving at a conclusion. [*Laughter from the Home Rulers and Ministerialists and Opposition cheers.*] I do not understand that interruption, because I think I am entitled to put it to hon. Members below the Gangway, who are the authors or supporters of this measure—[*Interruption*]—whether they really think they are thus helping its future prospects?

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether it is in Order for the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, in asking a Question of the Prime Minister, to address a lecture to Members in this part of the House?

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I would also ask the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government, whether he is aware that there are at least 70 Members on this side of the House who are desirous of addressing the House on this important subject?

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON (Lancashire, Rossendale): Before my right hon. Friend answers the Questions that have been put to him, perhaps he will allow me to say that I observe that my right hon. Friend referred the other day, in giving an answer on this question, to the wish of a very large number of Members who are going to oppose the Government measure to take part in the debate, and give individual explanations as to the course they will pursue. It is quite true that there are several hon. Members who intend to oppose this Bill who have not yet spoken, and who are anxious to speak, and among them there are some whose speeches would be, by general acknowledgment, not the least important contributions to the debate. But, as far as I have been able to ascertain, there is no such general desire on the part of the hon. Members who intend to oppose the Bill to give anything approaching individual explanations as to the course they are going to take. And I am able to say positively that many hon. Members who would desire, if they could obtain the opportunity, to speak, would, nevertheless, be willing to waive that desire in case it should be found to entail such a prolongation of the debate as would in their and our opinion rather lead to confusing the issue before the House than to elucidating it. I need not say that I have not the smallest complaint to make of the course the debate has hitherto taken. We propose—[*Cries of* "Order!"]

MR. SPEAKER: There is no Question immediately before the House. The noble Marquess is entitled to ask a Question as to the course of important Business, but not to go into any argument.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: I must ask the pardon of the House for having said as much as I have; but I thought that before my right hon. Friend answered the Questions, it would be desirable that he should be in possession of all the information on the subject.

MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): Before my right hon. Friend replies, I also should like to say one word with reference to the question raised. I have taken the trouble to make inquiries——["Order!"]

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I understand that Questions are Questions, and that statements are statements. If the statement of my noble Friend, which was apparently to be followed by a series of other statements, had been conveyed to me before I came to my place to answer the perfectly regular Question of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, I should have been very glad to have given it every possible weight, and to inquire into the circumstances of a statement which is quite at variance with that which had reached me through the channels which are usually employed for making communications as to the desire of hon. Members to take part in the debate. I could then have inquired into these circumstances, and I could have ascertained and satisfied myself how the facts stood, and, consequently, have given some satisfaction to my noble Friend. In the same way, in regard to my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham, nobody would be more willing than I to receive information upon the subject; but to receive statements of that kind, and to weigh them upon the instant without any power of communication with those to whom I look for information on the subject, and who are not in the habit of giving me that information without some consideration of what they say, is a course I do not think is either regular in a Parliamentary sense, or likely to contribute to the satisfactory conduct of Business. That is a frank explanation in reply to the very frank statement the noble Marquess has made. I can only say that I have no reason—I have had no reason until I came down to the House to-day—to modify in any way the statement which I made on a former night. After what has been said by my noble Friend—and further information may, perhaps, reach me to the same effect—I will certainly consider it before the debate is again resumed. That is, I think, the utmost I can do. I certainly cannot undertake to throw over the information conveyed to me without having an opportunity of carefully comparing it with the contrary information I have received. So much for the debate. I will do my best to put myself in a condition to speak on the subject on the next day of the debate. With regard to the course of Business on Monday, it will be our duty to ask for a Vote on Account, and we shall take it for the shortest period that will be at all sufficient to give us the necessary amount—namely, for a month. It will be likewise necessary, with the view of putting the Military Departments in cash, to take an Army Vote and a Navy Vote. I am sorry to say that it will be our duty to put the Arms Bill down as the second Order on Monday. Neither the Votes on Account nor the Committee on the Bill, so far as I know, are likely to lead to any lengthened debate. Still, the Committee stage is one which we should hardly like the House to take after half-past 12 or 1 in the morning. Our object then will be to go forward—without any further interruption of the course of the adjourned debate—with the stages of the Arms Bill from day to day, because there is no time to lose if we are to bring the Bill into operation at the time the old Act expires.

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: Does the right hon. Gentleman intend that the future stages of the Arms Bill will have precedence over the Government of Ireland Bill?

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: No; I said without further interruption of the course of the debate.

SITTINGS AND ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE—THE DERBY DAY.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to give Notice that on Tuesday next, at half-past 4 o'clock, I shall move "That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Thursday."

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA—THE JOINT COMMITTEE.

Mr. MAGNIAC (Bedford, N., Biggleswade) asked, Whether the right hon. Gentleman had decided the course he would take in regard to the appointment of the Indian Committee?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian), in reply, said, that they could not give precedence to that subject over the Arms Bill; but the first opportunity would be taken afterwards to proceed with it.

THE ESTIMATES—VOTE ON ACCOUNT.

SIR WALTER B. BARTTELOT (Sussex, North-West) asked, Which of the Army Votes was to be taken on Monday?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.) said, the Vote for Food would give sufficient money with the least controversy, and therefore he proposed to take that Vote.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL.—[BILL 181.]

(*Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Attorney General.*)

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

[FIFTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [10th May], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*The Marquess of Hartington.*)

Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed.*

MR. JUSTIN M'CARTHY (Longford, N.): Sir, I can well understand that hon. Members opposite who are anxious to "assist" the measure in the sense in which that word was used by the Leader of the Opposition should be anxious to assist it by a silent vote. Despite the assurance just given by the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington), the Friends of the Bill can congratulate themselves upon the improving and ripening prospects of the Bill within the past few days. Those bettering prospects have been brought about by some things occurring within the House, and by some things occurring outside the House. I think that the lengthened debate which we have already had in this House has done some good. I have no intention of referring to any of the points of last night's debate, though they are not unimportant; but it is well that the House of Commons should have a practical illustration of the extent to which sectarian hatred and the long-existing spirit of ascendancy, bitterness, and anger and passion in the North of Ireland depend upon the patronage and support of men in England. On that ground I am disposed to be glad that we heard some extraordinary Constitutional doctrines preached lately in this House by the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill). I am even disposed to be glad of the warlike statement made by the hon. Member for Ecclesall (Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett), who told us that he has not only the honour to be a Member of this House, but is also a full private in a regiment of Militia. But some events that have taken place and some words used outside the walls of this House have also done much good in bringing about improved prospects for this great measure. I should like to refer especially to one or two remarkable speeches made within the last week. At one time it appeared to me as if a single speech made by the Marquess of Salisbury was likely to prove the most powerful agent yet devised for bringing about the success of this great measure. The noble Marquess made a speech so full of passion and rancour—he endeavoured to revive the worst of the old No-Popery spirit—he spoke with a violence, energy, and bitterness that certainly did not become one in his position. He appealed in words of admonition to the opponents of the measure to "sharpen their swords." Of course, he only spoke in the language of metaphor; still, at a time like the present—at a time when even a great General and soldier, called upon to say whether he had or had not used certain significant expressions, could only answer that he did not use them in a public speech—when we have the bold declaration of our own *Miles Gloriosus* of the Militia regiment, I do not think it is well for any great English statesman to dabble too much in perilous metaphor. I could not help thinking that if the right hon. Gentleman at the head of Her Majesty's Government (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) had a chance of meeting the noble Lord on some platform he might well address to him the words of Shakespeare in *King John* addressed by Faulconbridge to another Salisbury—

> "Salisbury . . . . put up your sword betime;
> Or I'll so maul you and your toasting-iron
> That you shall think the devil is come from
> hell."

I trust Lord Salisbury will put up his toasting-iron, and not flourish it any longer during the remainder of this controversy. But I am bound to say the Marquess of Salisbury made a second speech in which, having, as it were, sheathed the "toasting-iron," he went on to contribute something more substantial to the discussion. Yes; he did at last propose a programme for the government of Ireland; and we would do him wrong if we did not admit that the noble Marquess did see his way to a programme, and confess that if he should succeed in turning out Her Majesty's Ministry, he, at least, knows what to do when he comes into their place. I invite the House to listen to the clear and precise statement of the Marquess of Salisbury's plan for the government of Ireland. There is, of course, to be coercion. That he now admits. At first he did not propose coercion—now, however, he admits it must be; but not that only. Here is what he proposes to do for Ireland—what he considers the duty of the Conservatives when they come into Office—

> "It is the duty," he says, "of the Government in Ireland to devote its energies to the amelioration of the condition of the people, to do all they can for the amelioration, moral as well as material, to do all that is possible to stimulate their education and increase their culture, to do everything that can be done to make their industry easy, to open the paths of prosperity at home, to facilitate the development of their commerce, so that by the action at once of peace and order and moral advancement, and that amount of prosperity which is secured by keeping off pinching want, they may reach to the level of that happiness which in this land it has been our privilege to enjoy."

Whoever does not at once admire the exceeding definiteness of that plan must, indeed, be very hard to please. One criticism must, unfortunately, be applied to it—that the noble Marquess, when telling us he was going to do all these things in accordance with the highest statesmanship, did not give us one hint or suggestion of how he was going to bring them about, or how he proposed even to set about establishing them. I was reminded of something that happened during the heat of the American War. President Lincoln was waited upon by a deputation—a most consequential deputation—who said that they had a most important programme to lay before his attention. The leader of the deputation said—

> "Mr. President, our programme is the settlement of this controversy on a speedy and peaceful basis."

The President said—

> "Exactly; that is my programme, too, only I do not yet know how to bring it to accomplishment, and you have not told me how it is to be done."

This is the defect of the noble Marquess's programme; he does not give the slightest idea of how to bring about all these magnificent results he tells us it would be his duty to accomplish. Therefore, we may say that, so far as any practical settlement of the case is concerned, we are still left with the old remedy of coercion, and the old suggestion as to the "sharpening of swords." Then another prominent figure in this present controversy is that of the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington). Now, I have entire respect for the position occupied by the noble Marquess. He has never professed to have any sympathy with the National claims of the Irish people; but, on the other hand, I am bound to say he has always been consistent, and never said, so far as I know, anything unfair or unkindly of the Irish people. If there is a man in the world who might be excused for cherishing some painful associations with the very name of Ireland it is the noble Marquess; and I never remember his saying anything unfair of Ireland, or even, I would say, of the National Party. Only he has never been in favour of Home Rule, but was always opposed to it, and is so still. But he, too, contributes nothing towards the settlement of the question. His attitude has been simply one of negation, saying—"I will not do this; I will not do that; I will not do the other thing." But he has no suggestion to make on his own behalf, or on the part of his Friends. We may, therefore, safely leave him out of consideration when seeking where to turn for a settlement of the question. So that there is nothing open but the measure which the head of Her Majesty's Government proposes. There is, indeed, another, and, in some respects, perhaps, a more interesting figure prominent in this controversy. Novel writers are said to be fond of what is called a "complex character." I think that in the right hon. Gentleman I am referring to we have a decidedly complex character—the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain). At one time it was well understood that he had a plan of his own. I remember reading a speech of the late Lord Beaconsfield, then Mr. Disraeli, delivered many years ago, and a passage in it struck me as being not inappropriate to the present state of things. He was discussing some of Sir Robert Peel's political projects; at that time he was more friendly to Sir Robert Peel than he afterwards became. He was speaking to a Member who had been a follower of Sir Robert Peel, but who was falling away somewhat. This Member talked to Mr. Disraeli about the Prime Minister's policy, and suddenly said—"Oh, we do not want his plan—what we want is Popkin's plan;" and Mr. Disraeli replied—"Sir, I object to this country being convulsed for the sake of Popkin's plan." But, Mr. Speaker, we are now in the inconvenient position that we have not even Popkin's plan. Popkin's plan has been withdrawn. Is no one prepared to come forward in the place of Popkins? Surely we may hope the right hon. Member for West Birmingham will yet bring something forward, and let us know what he proposes. So far, then, to use an expression with which we are familiar, the plan of the Prime Minister "holds the field" at present. We are only discussing the principle of the measure. I am not going to say that every one of the details has my complete approval, or the approval of those who are found on these Benches; but, on the other hand, we must remember that there never was a really great measure of legislation brought into the House that had not to undergo modifications before being passed into law. I remember no such measure that did not need, and that did not undergo, amendment in point of detail. Why do we accept this measure—why do we admire it? It is because it is a measure for the self-government of Ireland—because, for the first time since the Union, a great Minister and a great Party have raised the national flag of Irish self-government. In that spirit, and with that view, we cordially accept the Bill which proposes to give us a Parliament on College Green. Of course, we know just now that there is a very strong and passionate desire growing up amongst Members of this House and out-of-doors that the Irish Members should continue to retain their places in Westminster. Well, I can only say that we feel proud—not to say vain—of the extraordinary position we have come to. It is surely most delightful and flattering to us to be told that we are the keystone of the Imperial arch. Yes; it now appears that once we are withdrawn this splendid structure falls to pieces. Our opinion of ourselves grows every day. We never knew we were such nice people before. We never knew in what tender affection we were held. We never knew what pleasant company we are, and what tears would be shed at our departure. So attached are some hon. Members to us that they say they will absolutely wreck the Bill if some delegation of us is not left here to gladden them. Now, it is curious that some years ago, when I first began to write on questions of Home Rule—when I wrote several articles in a leading review on the subject—I always advocated the retention of the full number of Irish Members in this House. I was always met by English writers and Members of this House with the one self-same stereotyped answer—"We never can allow you Irishmen to go home and govern yourself apart from us, and then to come over here and take part in governing our Empire." Over and over again I was met with that reply, until I began to think it was hopeless to endeavour to frame any scheme of Home Rule which did not involve the exclusion of the Irish Members, and their relegation to an Irish Parliament in Dublin. No sooner did I come round to that state of mind—no sooner did I, if I may use the now familiar expression, "find salvation," than I was met by an instant change in the whole form and style of the criticism applied to that same proposition, and I was told—"We will have no Home Rule unless we have every one of you Irish Members, or a large number of you, to take part in the Business of this House." Well, I quite admit the force of the argument that in preparing a scheme of federation it would be better that such a course should be adopted; but how long are we to wait? Is Ireland bound to wait for the making of symmetrical and comprehensive schemes of federation? No such scheme has come within measurable distance of practical politics. This House of Commons has so much weighty work to do that it must be very long indeed, I fear, before it could frame and work out to practical success a broad, vast scheme of universal federation. But, Mr. Speaker, we in Ireland cannot afford to wait for that time. Our cause and our grievances will not bear the delay, and the question has reached a point when its settlement is imperatively called for; and we say to this House that the best thing to do is to form an Irish Parliament to begin with; and if at any time there should arise a demand for this scheme of federation, and if practical statesmen work it out, you have the Irish Parliament ready to be made a portion of that scheme. As my hon. and learned Friend the Member for South Londonderry (Mr. T. M. Healy) said very well in this House, a federation is a federation of Parliaments; and if you have an Irish Parliament you have, at least, that one step towards an Imperial federation. But, in the meantime, we want to do something. We want to bring back prosperity, material and moral, to our country. We think we see our way a little more clearly to such an end than the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury) appears to do in the programme he set forth. I was very much impressed by an argument used at an early stage of this debate by the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread). In the course of a singularly powerful and eloquent speech he impressed on the House the necessity and importance of leaving the Irish Members free to do the work of their own country, and that alone, for he showed what immense—what terrible—need we have to devote ourselves with all the energy in our power to bringing our country into the way of prosperity. We have, indeed, a great and responsible work to do. Think of the number of demands we have made, unsuccessfully, to this Parliament from year to year, from generation to generation. Think of the number of wants to be supplied, and still left unsupplied. Think of the mere question of national education—primary, University, and technical education. We want to give our country a measure of education which the Irish people, hungering and thirsting as they are for culture, will be able to accept as an ample and satisfactory settlement of their just claims. On that point hon. Members of this House know there is a considerable concurrence between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland. There is a large number of Irish Protestants who object to secular education as much as Irish Catholics. As to University education, that is, of course, in a most unsatisfactory condition in Ireland; and the House will well remember how scheme after scheme on that subject has been brought forward in Parliament; how some schemes were rejected, some accepted, amended, supplemented, and none of them going near to a satisfactory reform—to the universal demand of the Irish people. A scheme such as we desire would be settled in an Irish Parliament in the course of a single Session. Here it will come on Session after Session, and remain still unsettled. The reason is simply that there is in the English Parliament want of time and want of understanding too. First of all, you have not a proper understanding of the question; and, next, you have not, and cannot have, time to deal with it properly. You have other things to deal with which appear to you, and not unnaturally perhaps, more pressing; and this great question, as it seems to us, and as it is, is thrust aside meanwhile and forced into the background. There is nothing we want in Ireland more than a proper and substantial system of technical education. Many of the trades and manufactures of Ireland would become prosperous and vigorous if there was only sufficient technical education in the country. I do not believe that one of the wants of Ireland is, as has been stated, the want of capital from abroad of which we hear so much. A Committee sat upstairs to consider the subject of Irish industries, and some of the best authorities told us that there was in Ireland itself capital enough, but the capital wanted fluidity. It was there; but it was lifeless. That would not long continue if we had an Irish Parliament. Our capital under a Home Rule Government would be induced to flow, for we should have industry and trade. We would bring all the resources of the country into play, as to Irish fisheries, piers, harbours, canals, navigation, roads —in fact, with regard to almost everything concerning the internal traffic and life of the country. The other day I came across a Report by Dr. Sullivan, President of the Queen's College, Cork, and in that he gives details as to what ought to be done, and would be done, as to improving the manufacturing industries of Ireland. He pointed out the great want of harbours and piers all round the Coast for the accommodation of the fisheries; and he added that these, or anything like these, cannot be provided satisfactorily by the petty jobbing system hitherto adopted. He pointed out that if a country can afford to construct a network of water way through it without the expectation of immediate profit, it will be doing a work that is certain to be beneficial at large to the whole country, in the same way as a network of roads is constructed in all civilized countries, not for the benefit of the State, not for the benefit of individuals, but to facilitate the intercourse of the inhabitants. The same authority makes a remark which I commend to the attention of certain Members from Ulster above the Gangway. He speaks of the neglected condition of Lough Neagh. He says—

> "Lough Neagh stands in need of being deepened, and of having a few piers and landing places erected. I do not believe there is a sheet of water of the same extent in all Europe in so complete a state of nature as Lough Neagh is."

That does not speak so very well for the enormous energy of some of the people of Ulster. Under an Irish Parliament that reproach, I venture to say, would not exist. I have often been asked what sort of Parliament I think it is likely we should have in College Green—would it be, one English Member asked, a mere Parliament of politicians? Well, I may express my opinion, the opinion of one looking at the subject for many years at something of a distance, and say emphatically that it will not be a Parliament of politicians, but one of earnest, energetic, practical men, anxious to restore the prosperity of their country, and well knowing how to set about it. Sectarianism or class ascendancy would never, I believe, find a place in the debates of that Parliament. There would be eloquence, talent, and statesmanship; but there would be the hard work of practical administration. Further, I believe, and hope, and trust we would have men of the landlord class with us. I trust we should have some even of our Orange friends or enemies working with us cordially. I never care to join in any sweeping attack on the Orangemen. They have their weaknesses—others of us have. They speak strongly—sometimes far too strongly—and so, perhaps, do others; but my earliest political memories are drawn from the days of 1848; and in those days our dream was to regenerate the country by the union of "Orange and Green." That sentiment was conveyed by the refrain "Orange and Green will carry the day." I would rather have the Orangemen for friends than enemies. I say that, however, without the slightest fear of any danger that can come to our Party or our cause from the serried ranks in "the last ditch" or the battle array. I do not think the Leaders mean much fight, and I sincerely hope they do not mean any fight. When they cool down a little, and the battle does not come off, and the swords or "toasting irons" are sheathed, and the revolvers which have been ordered, we are told, in such vast numbers, are sent back to the makers, and the rotten eggs which have been ordered elsewhere have been buried in the earth, the Orangemen may see that the wisest thing is to settle down with us, and let all "take off our coats" and go to work together for the regeneration of our common country. One good thing, Mr. Speaker, this debate has done—it has entirely disposed of the mythical Ulster which was believed in by so many Englishmen. We have shown that Ulster is, by the majority of its population and of its Representatives, a Nationalist Province of Ireland. We have heard over and over again that the Ulster Members would do this and that. Who are the Ulster Members? One of them (Mr. William O'Brien) sits below me. I presume he would not vote for the exclusion of Ulster from the National Parliament. There are a number of Ulster Members sitting around me who are amongst the most advanced Members of the Irish National Party. I do not suppose they would vote for the exclusion of Ulster. In fact, there is nothing we could desire better than that this House should by some machinery take a *plébiscite* amongst the population of Ulster, and we should then soon see what was left to be said for the proposal to exclude Ulster from the shelter of an Irish Parliament. But I believe that the exclusion of Ulster is not a very serious proposition. If I am not mistaken, it forms part of the proceeding which I ventured to liken to Popkin's immortal plan. I do not believe that anyone who proposes that plan will get a great many Members of this House, even amongst the Secessionist Party, to "march through Coventry" with him. It has nothing to commend it to sane men's serious consideration. I do not think that very many hon. Members of this House, even those who now avow themselves Secessionists, will follow any Leader of Secession below the Gangway in support of such a proposal. It is possible that some right hon. Gentleman may try to play a game of brag. There is a legend told about the American War of Independence. A certain heroic American came in front of a British fort and called upon the fort to "surrender in the name of the Great Jehovah and of the American Confederation." His bluff game of brag was successful. The British commandant pulled down his flag. It may be that some such demand of surrender is being made at present to the Prime Minister with the same loud sound and the same amount of force behind it. But the Prime Minister is a very different kind of man from that English commandant, and I am perfectly satisfied he will not be induced by any bluff or game of brag to haul down his flag. I strongly trust that the right hon. Gentleman will listen to no suggestion for any serious mutilation of his measure. I strongly hope he will listen to no suggestion about hanging up this measure for another year. I trust that he will do exactly what he did in the great Reform struggle of 1866, of which he was the most prominent figure. I well remember the peroration of that memorable and magnificent speech with which he wound up one of the great debates on the Reform Bill in 1866. I well remember with what power and eloquence, quoting from the noble words of Virgil, he prophesied that an avenger would soon arise from the bones of those who were to perish on that field. Very soon the avenger did arise, and, curiously enough, from the quarter to which you might least have looked for it. The Reform Bill in the following year was brought in by the Tory Party. If I might venture to be prophetic now, I would say to the right hon. Gentleman that the avenger will surely rise from the bones of those who may perish in this fight, as well as from the bones of those who perished in that fight. Let him persevere, and let the enemies of this Bill and of Home Rule do their worst. On them and on their heads be the responsibility—the terrible responsibility—for any consequences that may follow. But let the right hon. Gentleman go straight on to a decision. One thing I will say to him with perfect confidence. I have not been much given to pouring out language of high compliment to him; but I would say, come what will, the right hon. Gentleman has secured National self-government for Ireland. The Irish people feel that, and know that, and they will never forget it. There was a great Englishman—another great Englishman—who stood up for the Irish people, and whose merits and whose services were so revered by them that our National poet Moore described the Irish banshee as wailing over his grave. That statesman, I need hardly say, was Mr. Fox. Moore wrote of him as of one

> "On whose burning tongue
> Truth, peace, and freedom hung."

I think the words might well be applied to the right hon. Gentleman. I would urge on this House the necessity for the deepest consideration before they take any course which may threaten to destroy, or even to delay, this Bill. I speak now for the principle of the measure. I ask this House to be most careful and most cautious how it seems to stand between the Irish people and the establishment of this great principle. Goethe, in some great words translated by Carlyle, admonishes those who hear him to "Choose well; your choice is brief, but eternal." Now, I do not, of course, believe that the consequences of a mistaken choice in this case would be anything like eternal, but they might be painful; they might be long-lasting; they might do much to destroy the feeling of hope and confidence and the peaceful desire for a settlement which is spreading in the breasts of the Irish people. But the right hon. Gentleman, I trust, will persevere. He has been invited, or challenged, to go to the country. By all means, if it be necessary, let us go to the country, and ask the English people and the Scotch people what they think of the right hon. Gentleman and of the cause he now has at heart. Let us fight the battle here first—let our enemies do all they can to injure and destroy the Bill. If they do destroy it, then let Parliament be dissolved—let us go to the country, and, in the good old phrase which used to precede the ordeal by battle, "God show the right."

Mr. FINLAY (Inverness, &c.) said, he desired to crave the indulgence of the House while he very shortly stated the reasons for the vote he proposed to give on the second reading of that measure. He was sure he expressed the sense of every hon. Gentleman present when he said that they had been all struck by the fairness and moderation of the speech made by the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down. It had been a pleasure to him to hear it, and it had been a pleasure to read almost everything he had written. He could assure the hon. Gentleman that hon. Members in all parts of the House were animated by a desire to do justice to Ireland not less ardent than that which burned in his own bosom, and that the only difference between them was as to the choice of the means best calculated to effect that end. It must be matter of great concern to any Liberal, and, above all, any Scotch Liberal, to find himself unable to agree in any line of policy propounded by the present Prime Minister. He did not believe that anything could happen that would destroy in Scotland the personal attachment felt by the people of that country for the right hon. Gentleman. But political allegiance even to the greatest of Party Leaders had its limits. And when a measure of such transcendant importance as that now before the House was brought forward, he conceived that it was the duty of every man calling himself a Liberal to examine it for himself, and to decide how he should vote upon its merits. He had listened, and listened most attentively, to the various speeches that had been made in defence of this measure and in explanation of its provisions, and he was reluctantly driven to confess that the objections which occurred to his mind when it was first introduced had been rather strengthened than weakened. He was sure that the House was immensely indebted to the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) for the very clear and intelligible statement that he had laid before the House a few days ago. One had a clear and definite statement with which it was possible to grapple. The hon. Gentleman undertook to show the House that the supremacy of Parliament was maintained, and that there was nothing in that measure which need render any advocate for the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament apprehensive that that supremacy would be trenched upon. The hon. Gentleman stated that if that measure became law the Imperial Parliament would retain the right to repeal it if it pleased next year, or to alter it in any manner that seemed fit; and the hon. Gentleman also stated that of the necessity and propriety of so doing the Imperial Parliament would be the judge, and the sole judge. He himself had read the measure with much attention, and since his hon. Friend stated his views the other night he had reconsidered the subject with all the care that he could bestow upon it, and he regretted to say that his conclusion was directly the reverse of that which his hon. Friend had arrived at. He should feel some hesitation in pitting his opinions against those of the hon. Gentleman; but it was some satisfaction to have the best reason to know that the views he himself entertained were shared by some of the very highest authorities on such a subject in the country. He desired to draw the attention of the House to the fact that if the measure was intended to have the effect that his hon. Friend stated, it would appear that extraordinary pains were taken to conceal that intention. The measure destroyed the Imperial Parliament as it now existed. It created out of the materials which the Parliament provided two Parliaments—one the British Parliament on this side of the water, and the Irish Parliament on the other side of the water. It made provision for the reconstitution of what might truly be called an Imperial Parliament, by summoning back the Irish Members in certain events to take part in the deliberations of the House. Now, he would call the attention of the House to the 37th section of the Act, and ask that honourable House whether that section was, on any reasonable reading of it, consistent with the view propounded by the Under

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs? Section 37 was in these terms—

> "Save as herein expressly provided, all matters in relation to which it is not competent for the Irish Legislative Body to make or repeal laws, shall remain and be within the exclusive authority of the Imperial Parliament, save as aforesaid, whose power and authority in relation thereto shall in nowise be diminished or restrained by anything herein contained."

He asked the House and his hon. Friend, if his view be the correct one, what was the meaning of the section? There they had an express provision, as regarded matters not competent to the Irish Legislature, that the powers of the Imperial Parliament should remain unimpaired. Was not the obvious inference from that that it was intended, as regarded matters which were within the competency of the Irish Parliament, that the power and jurisdiction of the Imperial Parliament should be curtailed? If that were not intended, the language was most unhappily chosen for the purpose which, they were assured, was within the contemplation of the framers of the Act. But the matter did not quite rest there, because the 37th section referred them on to the 39th section, and in the 39th section they found these provisions—

> "This Act shall not, except such provisions thereof as are declared to be alterable by the Legislature of Ireland, be altered, except by Act of the Imperial Parliament, with the consent of the Irish Parliament, testified by Address or by the Imperial Parliament to which the Irish Members have been summoned in pursuance of the powers conferred on Her Majesty," &c.

What was the meaning of a provision of that sort? The Act should not be altered except by Parliament to which the Irish Members had been summoned. And then they were told by his hon. Friend that really meant nothing at all. The Act might be altered next day, or next year, by the Imperial Parliament, although not an Irish Member had been summoned to it. What, might he ask, if that were the correct meaning of the Act, was the object and intention of Section 39? But his hon. Friend put the case in this way. He said—"Oh, there would remain in point of strict law the right in the British Parliament, which is also the Imperial Parliament, to alter the Act in spite of Section 39." Whether that were so in point of strict law he was not much concerned to discuss with his hon. Friend. [Mr. W. E. Gladstone: Hear, hear!] He entertained the very gravest doubt as to the correctness of that position, even looking at this matter in the narrowest and most technical manner, even looking at it in a manner, perhaps, more suitable for the Court of Chancery than the House of Commons. But of this he was thoroughly assured—that from the Constitutional point of view—from the point of view of good faith—the British Parliament could not deal with this Act in the manner suggested. It was said that—"Oh, if the Irish Parliament did not observe the spirit of the Act, you, the British Parliament, may alter it." Did not observe the spirit of the Act! Was there ever such astounding vagueness in any expression brought before the House to assist in carrying a measure of the sort?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. Bryce) (Aberdeen, S.): My hon. Friend has misapprehended me. There is no vagueness. What I called the spirit of the Act is exactly what my hon. Friend calls the Constitutional meaning or bearing of the Act.

Mr. FINLAY did not think his hon. Friend's explanation added very much to what he had said the other night. If the Irish Parliament did not observe the Constitutional meaning of the Act the British Parliament might repeal the Act without calling back the Irish Members. But who was to decide whether the Irish Parliament had observed the Constitutional meaning of the Act? According to his hon. Friend, the British Parliament. Then, might he ask, was not that a clear breach of the Treaty arrived at between this Parliament and the Irish nation by this Bill if it became an Act? What reservation was there in this 39th section that the British Parliament should be entitled to decide whether the Irish Parliament had observed the spirit or the Constitutional meaning of the Act? He affirmed without the slightest hesitation that the supremacy of Parliament arrived at in such a manner would, in every instance in which it was exercised, be based upon a breach of faith. Here was a Treaty with the Irish nation by which the Imperial Parliament contracted that this Act should not be altered except in a particular manner. There was no reservation to the British Parliament of the right to decide whether the Irish Parliament had or had not observed the spirit of the Act; and yet it was contended that, in defiance of that Treaty, the British Parliament might at its will and pleasure say that the Irish Parliament was not observing the spirit of the Act, and recall what they had given. But they now knew what the intention of the Government in this matter was, and if this Bill should ever reach the stage of Committee he supposed they might take it as now certain that the Government would remove all doubts by introducing words which would make it clear to hon. Members below the Gangway on the other side that their Parliament was to be entirely subject to the British Parliament, from which the Irish Members were to be excluded. He wondered how they would like it. He could not help being struck by the significant silence upon the Nationalist Benches, from which tumultuous applause usually proceeded when anything in support of the Bill was said, particularly when it came from the Treasury Bench—he could not help being struck with the silence when his hon. Friend was explaining his views on Constitutional law. The draftsmanship of this Act, if the intention was what his hon. Friend described, was indeed extraordinary. The draftsman must have had before him two well-known Acts of Parliament, the Indian Councils Act of 1861, and the Colonial Laws Act of 1865; and in both those Acts, dealing with closely analogous subjects, there were contained sections expressly reserving the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. Might he ask why those provisions, which could not have escaped the attention of those who drew this Act, were excluded from this Bill? The inference from their omission, if this Bill became law, and the question ever were argued in a Court of Justice, would be almost irresistible. But suppose this provision to be introduced, and the subjection of the Irish Statutory Parliament to be made so clear that no question could arise about it, were they to learn nothing from the teachings of history in this matter? His hon. Friend knew well that this very question, whether the British Parliament could make laws to bind Ireland, formed the subject of a long and envenomed controversy between the two countries. Volumes had been written on the subject. A Statute was passed in the Reign of George I. for the purpose of declaring that the British Parliament had power to make laws to bind Ireland; and the Irish nation—if he might quote the words of the historian Hallam—

> "could not avoid writhing under the indignity of its subordination, and it was impossible that the Irish House of Commons, constructed so much on the model of the English, could hear patiently of liberties and privileges it did not enjoy."

Were they in those matters to travel for ever in a vicious circle? Were they with their eyes open, and in spite of the teachings of history, to reproduce all the conditions that led to the agitation which culminated in the granting of Grattan's Parliament? He did not think so meanly of hon. Gentlemen from Ireland. They would not be the descendants of those ancestors who won their liberties last century if they tamely acquiesced in a state of things so degrading. They heard a great deal from the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Stansfeld) of the rights of nationalities, and a great deal about Irish nationality. He (Mr. Finlay) asked, would any nationality worthy of the name be content with a measure of this sort, giving it a Parliament subject to an alien Parliament, from which its Representatives were excluded? Grattan's Parliament had many faults, but it had, at least, one merit which this Statutory Parliament never would have—that it did satisfy the aspirations of the Irish nationality. [An. hon. MEMBER: It did not.] Then, was he to take it that the Irish nationality would not be satisfied even with Grattan's Parliament, and that they would take this measure as a stepping-stone to another, and they would regard another Grattan's Parliament as only a stepping-stone to complete separation? This proposed Parliament could not satisfy those aspirations. Not only would it be subject—if the intention as expressed by the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs were carried out—to a British Parliament; but in the management even of Irish affairs it would be "cabined, cribbed, confined" in a way which the Irish nationality would not long endure. Even if the Irish were content with a Parliament which would not have free scope with regard to religion and education, Customs and Excise, he asked how long was it likely the Irish would acquiesce in that provision which restrained their Parliament from passing any measures with regard to trade and navigation? What had been the cry of the Irish patriots since the time of Dean Swift, who took up the matter? It was protection for Irish industries. Dean Swift advised his countrymen to burn everything that came from England except English coals; and if he was not much mistaken there had been speeches made at a very recent date, amid tumultuous applause, at meetings in Ireland in which large measures of protection for Irish industries were advocated. How long would the Irish people acquiesce in restrictions of the sort that were named? They had heard a great deal of late of "autonomy." In the speech of the right hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) the word "autonomy" occurred in nearly every third sentence. He rolled it as a sweet morsel under his tongue. He seemed to think that in that "blessed word" he had found that peace which followed those anxious searchings of heart which preceded his complete acquiescence in this measure. Autonomy was a word which would bind no one who used it to anything. It might mean anything up to, and including, complete independence; and he apprehended the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) would find little difficulty in satisfying a tribunal much more critical than any he was likely to meet with in Ireland that that, after all, was the true meaning of the word. Of one thing he was perfectly satisfied, and that was that this measure did not grant autonomy to the Irish people. Autonomy was the right of a people to make its own laws. Did they call it autonomy when they struck out the power to make laws relating to religion and education, Customs and Excise, trade and navigation, and other subjects which were excepted? Hon. Members would be the very slaves of words if they were induced to pass the second reading of this measure by the introduction of this new phrase into the debate. He had listened with some surprise to some of the arguments that had been adduced in support of this measure. They had heard a great deal of the Treaty of Union. They might learn something, perhaps, from the history of Ireland during the last century; but he thought the House might also learn something from the history of Scotland in connection with this matter. They were told that the Treaty of Union was obtained against the unanimous sense of the Irish people; that it was obtained by the foulest corruption; and that it had long failed to bring prosperity and content to the people of Ireland. Every one of those things might have been said, and long was said, with even more truth, of the Treaty of Union with Scotland. Was the Treaty of Union with Ireland obtained without the sense of the people of Ireland? [*Cries of* "Yes!"] So was the Treaty with Scotland. If he might quote Sir Walter Scott, he said—

> "Men otherwise the most opposed to each other—Whig and Tory, Jacobite and Williamite, Episcopalian and Presbyterian—all agreed in expressing their detestation of the Treaty."

Was the Treaty with Ireland obtained by bribery? So was the Treaty with Scotland. The only difference was that the Irish Representatives, to do them justice, seemed to have driven a much better bargain with the Imperial Parliament than the Scottish Representatives did. The list of the bribes that were given to obtain the Scottish Treaty of Union had been published; and it had been well said that it would be difficult to say whether the descendants of those noble Lords and hon. Gentlemen would be more shocked at the fact that their ancestors were corrupted, or scandalized at the smallness of the bribes they received. It was said the Treaty of Union had failed to bring content and prosperity to Ireland. So the Treaty of Union with Scotland also failed to bring content and prosperity to Scotland for many a long year. It was not until after the accession of George III., after the year 1760, that Scotland began to experience any benefit from the Treaty. For some 50 years Scotland was a sufferer by the Treaty. Her shipping trade suffered, all classes suffered. The favourite inscription on sword blades in Scotland during the first half of last century was "Prosperity to Scotland and no Union," and no sermon was complete without having a slap at that obnoxious Treaty. No doubt, the conditions in Ireland were infinitely more trying, and it would be no matter for surprise if a much longer period of time and greater efforts were necessary to heal the scars, to heal the wounds, that centuries of wrong had inflicted upon Ireland. He did not think any Englishman could read the history of English dealings with Ireland without a blush; and accumulations of wrong were not done away with in a day; but he very much questioned whether the Treaty of Union with Ireland had, in point of fact, been a failure. They heard statements sometimes put forward as if it were the Treaty of Union that was responsible for the Irish Famine. ["Hear, hear!"] If hon. Members believed that, they would believe anything. The Treaty of Union has brought a great increase of prosperity to Ireland. It was true that that prosperity had of late been checked; but he believed that the check had been due to causes unconnected with the Treaty of Union, and to causes which its repeal, total or partial, would rather aggravate than remove. He desired very shortly to lay before the House what appeared to him to be the insuperable objections to the second reading of this measure. The maintenance of the Treaty of Union was thoroughly compatible with a large measure of local self-government. He desired to see a large measure of local self-government, not for Ireland only, but for the whole of the United Kingdom; and he believed he expressed the sense of the great majority of those who were opposed to this measure when he said that the devolution, to a very great extent, of the powers which now rested in the overworked Imperial Parliament might be effected upon Local Bodies to be elected in suitable districts. He believed that inquiries, for instance, as to Railways and Canals, Gas and Water Bills, ought to be conducted in Ireland before Irish tribunals; and what he would do for Ireland he would do also for Scotland and England. He would go a great deal further in giving power to hold these local inquiries as to local measures on the spot. A large measure of local self-government for Ireland would be perfectly compatible with the maintenance of the Union; but he believed this measure to be incompatible with the maintenance of the Union. They were sometimes told they ought to read the measure a second time, by way of affirming its principle; but it must be recollected that before the House could affirm a principle, whether it were embodied in a Resolution or a Bill, it must have some reason to believe that that principle was capable of being satisfactorily reduced into a good working measure. But were there 12 hon. Members outside the Cabinet who thought that this measure, if passed as it stood, would or could be made into a good working measure? The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) the other night was very clear in his desire that the principles of the Bill—which, by the way, he did not define—should be affirmed by the second reading, and then he made this significant statement—that every hon. Member had his own ideas of what alterations should be made in it. The hon. Member did not state his own idea; but he did say that the better a Constitution was on paper the worse it was in practice, from which he seemed to draw the comforting conclusion that the worse it was on paper the better it was likely to be in practice. He (Mr. Finlay) ventured to say that, not merely on matters of detail, but on matters of capital importance, which went to the very roots of this measure, there was an astounding diversity of opinion among hon. Members who were yet prepared to vote for the second reading of the Bill. He apprehended that if every hon. Member were to state how he thought the Bill ought to be transformed, they would find that the true Babel was among the supporters of this measure, and not amongst its opponents. One could not help being reminded, in looking at this measure, of the words used by that great master of argument and illustration — Lord Macaulay. In speaking of a proposal for separate Legislatures for the two countries, he said that such a measure would unite England and Ireland somewhat after the fashion in which the Siamese twins were united—

> "united by an unnatural ligament, making each the constant plague of the other, always in each other's way; more helpless than others, because they had twice as many hands; slower than others, because they had twice as many legs; not feeling each other's pleasures, but tormented with each other's infirmities, and certain to perish miserably by each other's dissolution."

He thought they were justified in coming to the conclusion that the fault was not in the workmanship, but in the essential principles of the Bill. The Bill was the work of the greatest political genius in the world, and he thought they were justified in concluding that if the measure was not one which could work well the fault was not in the execution, but in the principles from which the Bill had started. He did not wonder at the resolute refusal of the Government to acquiesce in the demand that the Irish Representatives should remain at Westminster. If the demand were conceded the whole Bill would be revolutionized. It would require to be re-drawn from beginning to end, and would not be the same measure, but another measure altogether. They had heard it suggested that there was diversity of view among those who, on the Liberal side, had led the opposition to the second reading of the Bill. He apprehended that the wish had been father to the thought, for it struck him that if the demand of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) for the retention of the Irish Members were acceded to, it would be found that there must, by logical sequence, emerge a measure to which neither the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (Lord Hartington) nor any other hon. Member of the House could have any objection. But the Bill would be totally transformed, and would not be the measure which the House was now asked to read a second time, but another measure altogether. But what followed from the adherence of the Government to that attitude as to not retaining the Irish Representatives in the Imperial Legislature? Why, this. Ireland was reduced to a mere dependency, paying tribute to a stronger and wealthier neighbour, but which had no voice in the shaping of the policy for which the tribute was required. They were told that that was the position of the Colonies, and this measure was intended to treat Ireland as if it were a Colony. The answer to that observation was short and decisive. The Colonies had no voice in the control of Imperial affairs; but they did not contribute taxation for Imperial purposes. It was impossible, therefore, to suppose that Ireland could acquiesce in a state of things similar to that which justly gave rise to the American War of Independence. He was quite sure, if he might speak for his own country, that Scotland would reject with indignation the proposal of such a measure. Were they to put upon Ireland what Scotland would spurn? But they were told the Irish took no interest in foreign affairs; that their attention was concentrated upon their own home matters. He very much doubted that statement. He believed that the interest in Imperial matters in Ireland was limited only, as it was in Great Britain, by the diffusion of education and intelligence; and Irishmen took just as much interest in Imperial affairs as Englishmen or Scotchmen of the same class. But he thought they had the best proof that there was one department of Foreign Affairs in which the followers of the hon. Member for Cork had taken a very keen interest indeed. When anything emerged in foreign affairs that was likely to humiliate and embarrass Great Britain, the most lively interest in these foreign affairs was manifested at Nationalist meetings. During the difficulties in the Soudan, after the hon. Member for Cork, the Mahdi was the most popular man among his supporters. He did not think that was a happy omen for the concern which the Irish, under this or any other Bill, would be likely to take in foreign affairs. They were told that the Irish Representatives accepted this measure, and that those who objected to it were *Hibernis ipsis Hiberniores*. He had listened very attentively to the debate, and to what had been said by the Irish Representatives; but he had not heard one word which would entitle them to charge them with breach of faith, if, after some months or years, they were to agitate to get rid of provisions in this Bill which they found to be impracticable and unworkable. They were tied to nothing, and if this measure were to pass, so far as the future of their country was concerned, they would have free hands; and he honoured them for that, with every motive for the passing of this measure, with victory and the spoils of victory almost within their grasp, the Irish Members had been careful not to say anything which would tie their hands, or prevent their asking more in the future. But even if they had said a great deal more than they had done, the question was not whether they were at this moment prepared to accept the Bill, but how long would the people of Ireland be content, under such a state of things, to accept it? What powers had hon. Gentlemen to bind the people of

Ireland as regarded the future? How many years would elapse before every Irishman worthy of the name—[*a laugh*]—the hon. Member who laughed would not assume the same tone at a meeting of Irishmen in his own country—how many months would elapse before every Irishman who was worthy of the name would be up in arms against the continuance of a state of things so intolerable and so degrading? But he had another objection to the measure, an objection that related to it so far even as it dealt with purely Irish affairs. This measure proposed to create one Parliament for two nationalities. Here he would again, if the House would permit him, quote from Lord Macaulay, whose speeches upon this subject really contained almost everything that could be said upon it. Lord Macaulay said—

> "Of this I am quite sure, that every argument which has been urged for the purpose of showing that Great Britain and Ireland ought to have two distinct Parliaments may be urged with far greater force for the purpose of showing that the North of Ireland and the South of Ireland ought to have two distinct Parliaments."

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: What is the date of the speech from which this quotation is made?

MR. FINLAY said, he thought the date was 1833. He was not aware that there was the slightest reason to suppose that Lord Macaulay, up to the end of his life, in any degree changed or modified his opinions. He asked hon. Members who had listened to the debate on the Arms Act last night whether they thought the tone of that debate was re-assuring as to the prospects of Ulster if this measure were passed? Ulster was largely inhabited by a population nearly akin in blood and religion to that of Scotland. That population, if this Bill passed, would be in a permanent minority. They protested with one voice against the passing of this Bill. [*Cries of* "No!"] The population of which he was speaking protested with one voice against the Bill. Should they hand them over bound hand and foot to a rule which, rightly or wrongly, they would abhor? The problem was still further complicated, for there were scattered throughout the South and other parts of Ireland groups of settlers of the same race and religion. Ulster would not abandon them, and Ulster asked that she herself should not be abandoned. He had heard with some surprise complacent references made last night to the probability that John Bull might employ the Forces of the Crown for the purpose of putting down the Ulster to which he referred. As to that, John Bull might answer for himself; but, if he knew anything at all of his own fellow-countrymen, he was perfectly certain that Scotland would never abandon Ulster. But they were told the fate of Ulster was to be determined in Committee. He asked the House whether such a proposal was ever made before? He thought it should be made clear, before they passed a Resolution relating to Home Rule or autonomy for Ireland, whether or not Ulster was to be included. Were they to read the Bill a second time without determining a vital principle of that sort? He maintained that the mere fact that the fate of Ulster was as yet undetermined was a sufficient reason for not reading the Bill a second time. But then they were told provisions were made for the protection of the minority by the constitution of a first and second Order. There were to be two Orders. There was to be an Order elected by owners of property of a certain qualification. They had heard a good deal, in the course of the discussion, about this measure; but they had not heard this proposal for the two Orders seriously treated. It was a proposal which in its nature was inconsistent with the democratic tendencies of the age. It was a proposal which he did not believe could become law, and it was a scheme which, if it did become law, he did not believe could last for six months. Then they were referred to another provision made for the protection of the Loyal minority in Ireland. They were told that there was a power of veto to be exercised by the Lord Lieutenant on measures that might be passed by the Irish Parliament, and this provision was contained in the 7th section of the Act, which provided that—

> "Subject to any instructions which may from time to time be given by Her Majesty, the Lord Lieutenant shall give or withhold the assent of Her Majesty to Bills passed by the Irish Legislative Body."

Now, he thought the House was entitled to have a clear and explicit statement whether that veto was to be a real one or not. Was it intended to be exercised as the veto of the Crown in this country was exercised—on the advice of the responsible Ministers who represented the majority in the Irish Parliament? That proposition was one which would render the veto no veto at all, because the Ministers who represented the majority of the House which had passed the measure were certain to advise the Crown to give its assent to it. If this was a real veto, on whose advice was it to be exercised? It must be on the advice of the British Cabinet. Then they would have this extraordinary state of things produced—that every time the veto was exercised they brought into collision the Executive of Ireland and the Executive of Great Britain. Was that a state of things to which that House would lend its sanction? Would it allow of the veto being really operative and effective? They had got a very substantial proof that it was not contemplated that the veto should be effective, and that proof was found in the fact that the sister measure, for the purchase of land in Ireland, was regarded as being an essential part of the scheme. He was not going to discuss the details of a measure that was not then before the House; but it was manifest that such a measure as the Land Purchase Bill was required, because there was an idea that injustice might be done to landlords; but if the veto were a real veto the injustice might be prevented. There was no confidence in the veto; therefore it was necessary that the Land Purchase Bill should be passed. He would particularly call the attention of his hon. Friends below the Gangway to that point. If the Bill now before the House passed and became law, the passage of the Land Purchase Bill into law became inevitable. It was not only that they had been told that honour and policy alike required some such measure, but there would be behind the Government such support as would render the passage of the measure certain. It would be of no use for hon. Members below the Gangway to vote against the Land Purchase Bill. They might record their protest against it, and discharge their consciences, but the Government would have behind it a solid phalanx on the other side of the House who would vote for the passage of the measure as, in their opinion, a necessary measure of justice to the landlords. He appealed to his hon. Friends whether, under these circumstances, they would think it right that the Bill now before them should be read a second time, which, if it became law, would render it necessary and inevitable that the Land Purchase Bill should follow, and also become law? He protested against the second reading of this measure, because, if it passed, they would have to pass another measure by which the working men of their Scottish towns, their agricultural labourers, and their Highland crofters would have their credit pledged as taxpayers for the purpose of providing compensation to Irish landlords. He had submitted what, to his mind, were five blots in this measure. The first was, that he thought they had the best reason for believing that the principles of the Bill were not capable of being embodied in a measure which would work satisfactorily. The second was, that it had about it no element of finality, but would, in the very nature of things, only open the way to agitation for fresh concessions. The third was, that it would reduce Ireland to the position of a tributary, without a voice in that policy the taxes for which it had to provide. The fourth was, that it would put the population of Ulster, to which he had referred, in a permanent minority, and under an Executive representing a majority in the South of Ireland. And the fifth, and perhaps the most serious of all, was that, if this measure became law, as surely as the sun would rise to-morrow it must be followed by the passing of the Land Purchase Bill. But they were told that, whatever were the objections to the Bill, they ought to pay deference to foreign opinion. He paid all proper deference to foreign opinion. He believed that on that point it was really in suspense; but even if it were more clearly pronounced than it was, after all, we ought to know our own business best. The risk was ours—it was upon us, upon Great Britain, and upon Ireland that would fall the penalties failure; and if the measure did not not succeed, these very nations, in deference to whose supposed opinion we were asked to pass this measure, would justly deride us if, on such grounds, we passed a Bill that in its results proved disastrous. They were told that the opponents of the Bill incurred a great responsibility. What, he would ask, was the responsibility of those who supported it? They were told that the opponents of the Bill on that—the Liberal—side of the House were seceders from the Liberal Party. He denied it; and, more than that, he retorted the charge. It was not they who were seceders, but those hon. Gentlemen who were prepared to vote for a measure at variance with the principles of every great Liberal statesman, till recently, since the Union. They were told that their action might injure the Liberal Party. To his mind, the real enemies of the Liberal Party were those who seemed to be bent on conveying to the mind of the country the impression that the rank and file of the Liberal Party was made up of men who were ready to vote for anything at the word of command. He believed that to reject this Bill was the path of honour, and he hoped and believed that for the Liberal Party it would prove to be the path of safety also.

Mr. Serjeant SIMON (Dewsbury): Sir, my hon. and learned Friend who has just sat down (Mr. Finlay), in the very able speech which he delivered, said, with reference to the opinion of foreign nations, that we best know our business. I wonder that he did not see the application of that principle to the Irish Members. They, I should think, know what is best, what is good for their country, and they come here to say so, and they support this measure. My hon. and learned Friend quoted the speech of my hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce); but he did scant justice to his argument. It is true that the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs laid down a very wide proposition as to the power inherent in the Imperial Parliament. Every tyro in Constitutional and political history knows that the Imperial Parliament is omnipotent; and, in referring to its jurisdiction, Lord Coke said—"*Si jurisdictionem spectes, est capacissima.*" The Imperial Parliament has the power to change the succession to the Crown, as it did in the time of Henry VIII. and William III. It has power to change the established religion of the country, as it did in the time of Henry VIII. and his three immediate Successors; and it has the power to change the Constitution itself, as it did at the time of the Revolution. But, Sir, I did not understand my hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State to mean that Parliament, although it has the Constitutional power, would have the moral right to repeal a Statute which formed the substance and subject of a compact between ourselves and another country; on the contrary, if my hon. and learned Friend had continued the quotation from the Under Secretary of State, he would have found that he went on to say that, if this measure become an Act, it would be a compact between the Imperial Parliament and the people of Ireland, and that if the compact was not violated by the people of Ireland, we should have no right to alter or rescind it without the consent of the Irish people declared through their Representatives. In that way he qualified the larger proposition he had laid down. My hon. and learned Friend has quoted from the pages of *Hallam*, to show that there was a long contest between the Irish Parliament and the Imperial Parliament, and that the Irish Parliament was continually claiming independence; and he referred to the Statute of 1 *Geo.* I., which declared that the Irish Parliament was subservient to the Imperial Parliament. But my hon. and learned Friend forgot another Statute, that of 23 *Geo.* III., which repealed the Statute of George I., and which distinctly laid down and declared in the most positive manner that the Parliament of Ireland and the Judicature of Ireland were entirely independent of the Imperial Legislature and the Imperial Judicature. That Statute of 23 *Geo.* III. repealed the Statute on which my hon. and learned Friend laid so much stress, and it was an extraordinary omission on his part that he did not allude to it. But in quoting from *Hallam* I will remind my hon. and learned Friend of another passage in the very same page, I think, from which he quoted, in which the historian tells us that, from the time of Henry VI. or Edward IV., it was established that the Statutes of the Imperial Parliament had no effect in Ireland, unless they were re-enacted by the Irish Parliament. It is true that the contention between the two Parliaments was afterwards revived; hence the Statute of George I.; but that Statute, as I have shown, was repealed by 23 *Geo.* III., and the independence of the Irish Parliament declared by it. Hon. Gentlemen, both inside and outside of the House, speak of this measure as if the idea of an Irish Parliament was something new. The whole discussion, from first to last, seems to go upon the assumption that Ireland has never had a Parliament, and that it is proposed for the first time to establish one in Ireland. Why, in the time of Henry II., immediately after the Conquest, the King introduced into the country, as far as he could, all the political and judicial institutions which existed in this country, and King John, I believe it was, summoned the first Parliament, and the Parliament then instituted existed, in a more or less developed form, down to the time of the Act of Union. It is true that, until Grattan's Parliament, it was subservient to the British Parliament; that before "Poyning's Law" there was no limitation to its power. [Mr. GLADSTONE: Hear, hear!] Poyning's law introduced the first limitation, and that limitation was taken away by the institution of Grattan's Parliament. But it is said that—

> "The Irish Parliament was, after all, a miserable affair; that it was only a Protestant Parliament, a Parliament for the Protestants of Ireland."

That is true; but it had, nevertheless, jurisdiction over the whole of Ireland, and it exercised it. But suppose it was only a Protestant Parliament, what else was the Parliament of England at that time, and down to a very recent period? Why, in that respect, the English Parliament was even inferior to the Irish Parliament, for it was not merely a Protestant Parliament, but a Parliament composed of the members of one Protestant Church only; none but a member of the Church of England could sit in it down to 1828, when the Test Act was repealed. I do not care to traverse the ground which has been so often traversed already; and I will say nothing as to the manner in which the Parliament of Ireland was induced to put an end to its existence. I would rather consider the circumstances and the necessities which caused the introduction of this measure. It is the result of a long and bitter experience; an experience that has taught us to know and to feel that we have failed utterly in governing Ireland through the Imperial Parliament. I hold in my hand a list of measures rejected by this or the other House to prove my statement. We have here, for instance, 103 or 106 Irish Members, considerably outnumbered by the Members representing England and Scotland. In the House of Lords Ireland has no representation at all, for the 28 Irish Peers who sit there are the Representatives of a class—they do not represent the country. What is the consequence? Whenever a measure is introduced with the most beneficent purpose—take the case, for instance, of the Land Act of 1870—it is mutilated here first, in order to conciliate its opponents, and when it gets to the House of Lords it is torn to tatters, if not rejected entirely. That was the case also with the Land Act of 1881—[Mr. GLADSTONE: Hear, hear!]—when the Prime Minister, although he had been cautioned again and again by the Members from Ireland as to its insufficiency in many particulars, was unable to move a step because of the difficulties by which he was surrounded. Then, what became of the question of Irish Education in 1873? The right hon. Gentleman was sent to power in 1868 by an overwhelming majority; in 1873 that majority was broken up and his Government wrecked on the Irish Education Question. What hope, therefore, can there be for Irish Members who set their hearts upon improving the educational system of their country, and who cannot have that improved system because the Imperial Parliament cannot agree to give it in the form in which it would be acceptable to them? I have here a list of measures which were rejected when hon. Gentlemen who sit on the other side of the House were in power. Measures which were non-political, such as Bills for the reform of Corporations, for the Registration of Voters, for the Improvement of Harbours and Fisheries—they were ruthlessly and invariably rejected. I remember remarking on many occasions to hon. Members on both sides of the House what a mistake it was, how the very thing was being done to encourage and to justify the demand for Home Rule. When we see a state of things like this, when we see a Parliament constituted as we are, even with the best intentions and endeavours, failing to satisfy the wants and wishes of the Irish people, is it surprising that they should demand to govern themselves, and to legislate for their own wants? I do not fear the evils which are predicted by the passing of a measure of Home

Rule; and if I may be allowed to say something personal, I am not "one of the herd, or blind followers" of the right hon. Gentleman, to use the expression of some newspaper writers. I have judged for myself in this matter, for it will be in the recollection of some hon. Members that I voted for Mr. Butt's Motion in 1876. The experience of the years which have elapsed since that time has convinced me that there is no other solution of the difficulties between the two countries but that of giving to Ireland the right of legislating for her own internal affairs. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James), whom I am sorry not to see in his place, says that you will destroy the union of the Empire if you pass this measure; and my right hon. and learned Friend defined "union" as being union of law, or, as he further explained it, union of the law-making power. I should have liked to ask him —"Is there no union between Great Britain and her Colonies?" There are two law-making powers here and in our Colonies to which we have granted Constitutions; and allow me to show you the result of the division of the law-making power. I believe that in all the Australian Colonies and in Canada a man may marry his deceased wife's sister. In Australia and Canada she is his wife; but if he brings her here she is his mistress. His children can inherit his property in Australia and Canada; they cannot do so here. In those Colonies, if he marry another woman in her lifetime, he commits a crime; if he does the same thing here, it is no crime. Now, could there be a more striking example of divergence in the law-making power? Yet would my right hon. and learned Friend say that, because there is that divergence, there is no union between Great Britain and Australia or Canada? There was a great deal of discussion last week about "right," and "abstract right." I have never read of any such distinction in any work on "Morals" or Jurisprudence. I have read of "perfect" and "imperfect rights," and of "perfect" and "imperfect obligations;" but I have never read of any distinction between "right" and "abstract right." But away with all these scholastic subtleties! They are, no doubt, interesting to us while we are students, and they are appropriate to the lecture-room; but they are, I think, out of place in an Assembly like this. I would rather appeal to those considerations and employ arguments that go straight home to the common sense of ordinary mortals; and I believe that the appeal which has gone forth now to the country, to the ordinary sense and instincts of right of the people, will not have been made in vain. They feel that injustice is going on, and that there is constant collision, and bitterness, and disaffection in Ireland, reaching to the verge of insurrection. They feel that something must be wrong, if all the attempts we have made to conciliate and to benefit that country have been failures, and they will say —"Give the Irish people a chance; let them manage their own affairs!" That is the plain, straightforward, common-sense view. But then we are told by a noble Marquess—the Marquess of Salisbury—that instead of this measure our true policy is a course of 20 years' firm government of Ireland—that is, of coercion. But the late Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Chaplin) said the other night that coercion was a misnomer, when used in reference to Ireland—that coercion was merely to compel obedience to the law. Well, it is true that all laws are coercive. Laws to make men keep their contracts, and laws to make one man keep his hands off his neighbour's property or his person, are coercive; but coercion as applied to Ireland is a very different thing. It does not mean merely compelling men to respect the law; it means the suspension of the liberties of the people. It means government by spies and policemen. It means the imprisonment of the innocent as well as the guilty, indiscriminately, upon mere suspicion, and for an interminable period without trial. I remember the effect of that state of things even upon hon. Members upon the opposite Benches. It was repugnant to their instincts and feelings, as Englishmen and Scotchmen, that men should be kept in prison on mere suspicion for an indefinite period without trial and without inquiry; and I remember a gallant Admiral (Sir John Hay), no longer in this House, putting a Question on this subject from the Benches opposite, and giving Notice of a Motion with a view to protesting against such a state of things. Well, are we now to go on in this old groove? Are we to have 20 years of this sort of government in Ireland? Are we to allow our country to play the *rôle* of Russia towards Poland? I believe that there is no Englishman or Scotchman who would face that alternative. I am astonished when my hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Finlay) stands up here and says that the Union has been a success. Why, it has been one succession of Coercion Acts, one succession of repressive measures, suspensions of the Habeas Corpus Acts. In the whole course of the 86 years of the Union we have had 85 Coercion Bills of one sort or another, each of them of increasing severity, and the result is widespread disaffection and misery in Ireland, and hatred of English rule. Is this success? Then we hear it said—"What are you going to do with the loyal inhabitants of Ireland?" I have a great respect for those who are loyal, and I should be very sorry to take part in doing them wrong. But my advice to them is that they should show their loyalty by making peace with their fellow-countrymen. Give up your part of the "English garrison," and remember that you are Irishmen, and as Irishmen recognize your countrymen of different race and faith as your countrymen, and I believe you will have nothing to fear from them, and that you will reap good for yourselves and your country. It is said that you possess, and that you represent, the capital, the intelligence, the education, and the enterprize of Ireland. If that is so, apply those gifts and those advantages to the good of your country; bring your talents to its councils, and they will have their full weight. Then it is said that the feeling of Party is so strong in Ireland, that if hon. Members from Ireland sitting below the Gangway opposite were to become hereafter the Representatives of their country in an Irish Parliament, they would show no mercy to the minority—they would starve them out of the country. Well, Sir, I have mixed a great deal with my fellow-men, and I have known a great many Irishmen; but I never yet met an Irishman who was a fool. I have always found that, genial, and kind-hearted, and agreeable as he is, no one has a keener eye to his interest; and I do not think you would find the Irish Members, if returned to an Irish Parliament, so foolish and so stupid as to wish to drive all the capital and the best intelligence out of their country. I believe the whole thing is a myth, and that any apprehensions as to the action of an Irish Parliament, when it was established, would prove to have been unfounded. It is true that the Parliament of Ireland, as respects this Parliament, will hold an inferior position; but it will have all that the people of Ireland are asking for—namely, the right to legislate for their own internal affairs. And then "tribute" is spoken of. I say the word is not appropriate, because the Irish will simply be paying a fixed sum previously agreed upon for the benefits conferred upon them, and for the protection which will be afforded by Great Britain. As to separation, the idea always seems to me utterly absurd. Ireland separate from us when we are in actual possession of the country, when we shall have an Army there, and a Navy to guard and protect her Coast! How is it possible that there can be any separation under such circumstances? No, Sir; there is far more separation now. There is separation in feeling; there is disaffection towards the Imperial Government, the causes of which I have briefly referred to. But my earnest belief is, that if a measure of this kind be passed you will find a cordial union between the two countries spring up which has never existed before; and that, so far from wishing for separation, the Irish people will rather seek to draw more closely than ever the ties between England and Ireland. There is another question to which I wish briefly to refer—namely, the removing of the Irish Members from this House. I am not one of those who object to that provision in the Bill. It seems to me that if the Irish are to have a Parliament of their own they will have quite enough to occupy their best men in conducting the business of their own country. But I go further. I protest against Irishmen, who will have the right to conduct their own business in Ireland, coming over here and interfering with ours. I cannot see any injustice in their exclusion. But it is said that their retention would be a sort of pledge or symbol of the union of the two countries. Well, it would be a symbol that would be more likely to produce mischief than good, because it would not only bring them here to interfere in our business, but it might bring about those very agitations to which my hon. and learned Friend in his speech referred. I, therefore, do not join in the cry that the Irish Members ought to remain in this House. Then it is said that the principle of the Bill is inseparable from its details. I cannot see it in this Bill any more than in any other Bill. The principle is clear and patent. It is local legislation for Ireland. That is the principle of the Bill as I conceive it; and it is to that, and that only, that I commit myself in according the Bill a second reading. I will only conclude by saying that I hope, notwithstanding any opposition that may take place, and notwithstanding any secession from our ranks, hon. Members from Ireland will be patient, as we English and Scotch Members are obliged to be patient. We do not have our grievances removed in a day. We require many years of agitation to pass our measures. This question is now thrown before the country for the first time by a responsible Ministry; and you cannot expect that the country will in a few weeks make up its mind to do something almost entirely new to them, and which is presented by some men of weight in a highly objectionable light. This is the first time that a measure of this kind has been introduced by a responsible Ministry. The Repeal of the Union was agitated by Mr. O'Connell, who moved for it in this House. He failed. His movement was crushed; but it was not killed. Mr. Butt moved his Motion in 1876, and although he failed to carry it the movement had only smouldered; and now it is taken up and proposed on the responsibility of one of England's greatest Ministers, supported by the able men who compose his Cabinet. Introduced and laid before the country under these circumstances—do you think that it is possible that this movement can ever die? It will live, and it will grow; and if its opponents succeed in throwing out the measure, what will be the result? They will be dashing to the ground hopes which have been raised; they will be trifling with the tenderest and most sacred feelings of a people. I am not prepared to take upon myself, as an individual, any responsibility for throwing out this measure; and I shall vote for the Bill in the hope that, even if we fail to pass it this Session, the principle of self-government for Ireland may be adopted, and that the country will rally round the Prime Minister, and support him in his noble endeavour to establish peace and goodwill between the two countries.

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.) Sir, it is extremely difficult to distinguish between the speeches of certain hon. Gentlemen on the Government Benches and those of our Tory opponents. The extraordinary bitterness with which the hon. and learned Member for Inverness Burghs (Mr. Finlay) has assailed this measure and the Irish Members must have struck the House very forcibly. There is, however, a reason for it. The hon. and learned Member has not forgotten that the votes of the Irish Party destroyed a little project of his with regard to the Church of Scotland which was in opposition to the views of the people of Scotland. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ* and the hysterics which we heard a short time ago. The hon. and learned Member went through the whole gamut, seeking for every possible objection to this measure. It would appear that he not only desired to keep the Irish people slaves, but to make them feel that they were slaves. He paid his tribute of respect to Ulster nationality; but that was a matter which has so often been explained that I am really surprised at the pertinacity with which hon. Members advance the same old arguments. What is Ulster nationality? Out of the two counties of Antrim and Down no such thing as an Orange nationality exists. Should Ulster get a Parliament, it is perfectly manifest that she would, under even the existing circumstances, throw in her lot with the rest of Ireland, or else elect the hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) her Prime Minister—a result which it is questionable whether or not it would be pleasing to hon. Members above the Gangway. The views of Lord Macaulay have been described to the House in opposition to the views of the whole Irish people. The fact is plain—that the Irish Members have been elected on this single plank; and what is the sense or reason for parading the views of Lord Macaulay, or anyone else, in opposition to that wish? The hon. and learned Member wishes to drag Scotland into the controversy; but it is very doubtful whether he is authorized to represent the views of Scotland on the subject. There is no doubt that there is no means, except by a measure of this kind, to allay the disaffection existing in Ireland. Sir, the House has, in the course of this debate, listened to a great variety of opinion, favourable and unfavourable, to the merits of the measure under discussion, the importance of which cannot be exaggerated. And I trust in the resulting haze of argument *pro* and *con* the House will not lose sight of what is the real object of the Bill, and what, by its authors, it is calculated to accomplish. Sir, its aim is no less than the pacification of Ireland; the ending of the bitter strife of centuries between Ireland and England. I do not think a proposal of vaster importance can be brought before this House. No enterprize affecting more closely the welfare of the British Empire has ever been undertaken; and, should it be the good fortune of the Prime Minister, as I hope it will be, to succeed in his great endeavour to effect this pacification of Ireland, and to link these countries in bonds of lasting friendly Union, he will have done a service to England and to Ireland transcending in importance anything accomplished by any other British statesman who has preceded him. I have been amazed, and I am sure many hon. Gentlemen must equally have been amazed, to observe the pertinacity with which the opponents of the Bill have indulged in the use of irritating language, the only result of which could be to stir up and keep alive religious animosities in the Orange quarters of some Ulster counties. The existence of a partizan spirit amongst the Orange Ascendancy Party of Ulster, however much it is to be deplored, is intelligible, and to some extent, perhaps I might say, to be excused; for, unhappily, those men have been nursed and brought up in the midst of hateful prejudices and religious animosities, which Irish landlords and English Governments have, for their own base ends, zealously cultivated in that part of Ireland. But what is to be said for Englishmen, for whom we can make no such excuse, and who, nevertheless, recklessly join in and encourage the employment of such language? Sir, the bitterest enemies of your Empire have no more powerful allies than those Gentlemen who, in the interests of base Party tactics, employ purposely irritating language in the discussion of a question of such vast importance as this. Some of the opponents of the Bill, apparently more anxious for Party tactics than regardful of the merits of the measure, or of the consequences of its success or failure, have taunted Irishmen that they have not always spoken of the Prime Minister in laudatory terms. But, as an Irishman who for a good many years has taken part in the politics of my country, I can tell the House that the feelings of the bulk of the people of Ireland for the right hon. Gentleman have, for many years, been those of gratitude for what he has striven to do, and admiration for his commanding abilities. Even on occasions when he became the instrument of suffering to themselves they strove in their own minds to distinguish between the man and the politician, forced by the exigencies of his position to be a party to what in his heart he detested. Among the number of those who will have addressed the House on this question, perhaps the opinions of one so insignificant as myself may, because of the circumstances of his past, be considered not unworthy of being recorded. Of the earnestness and sincerity of my convictions I have given unmistakable proof; for, acting on the Constitutional theory of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), having satisfied myself that Constitutional methods had been fully tried and tested, I joined in an attempt at armed resistance to misgovernment in the year 1867, and for which I was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. But, notwithstanding the distinctness of my record in opposition to the misgovernment of my country, I have, for some years, been of opinion that some tolerable *modus vivendi* between Great Britain and Ireland would be a desirable and satisfactory settlement of the quarrel. I should never have consented to enter this House if I had not first made up my mind to do my best towards establishing and carrying out such a Treaty of Peace between Ireland and England. And I beg to assure the House that, in my opinion, this measure—amended as suggested by the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr.

Parnell)—will be loyally accepted as a settlement by the vast majority of the Irish people at home and abroad, and will effect the pacification of Ireland, and put an end to that bitter strife of centuries, substituting for the hateful state of things now existing a real Union between the countries, founded on mutual goodwill and mutual respect. The opponents of the Bill assert that the authors of it have put into it the clauses and safeguards providing for the protection of the minority, because they distrust the majority of the people of Ireland. But the Prime Minister and other Members of the Government, on the contrary, have assured the House that those safeguards have been framed, not because of their distrust of the Irish people, but only to satisfy the groundless fears of the minority. For the same reason, Sir, we consent to those very elaborate safeguards, though they are positively restrictions which, in the hands of an unreasonable minority, would make the proposed Irish Legislature entirely unworkable. Nevertheless, we are willing to consent to those restrictions, because we do not believe that our Protestant fellow-countrymen, any more than ourselves, are the mad idiots they are represented to be. We believe this horrible mist of prejudice and religious animosity will not long resist the sun rays of healthy, actual experience when Irishmen of all Parties come together, and when each shall find that the strongest feeling in the breasts of all is an earnest desire to serve their common country. Sir, if any other country could point to a record of patriotism equally free from religious bigotry and intolerance, it would not need to assert before the people of England—the greatest admirers in the world, perhaps, of patriotism and religious liberty everywhere out of Ireland—that a like minority under like circumstances would be safe within its borders. Sir, the Protestant minority would be far more safe in Ireland than in any other country in the world under like circumstances. This is my honest and sincere conviction, and I must pretend to know my countrymen far better than those who have so grossly maligned them in this House and out of it during the past few months. Next, will the people of Ireland honestly carry out the contract? On this side of their character, also, the people of Ireland have been shamefully slandered. Let anyone for a moment consider how the property of Irish tenants has been confiscated for many generations; many millions of rent having been levied upon the very property created by themselves, and consider how those poor Irish tenants have, generation after generation, steadily paid those cruelly unjust exactions, so long as the barest subsistence for their families was left them. Let anyone consider the evidence, the honourable evidence, which Members of the Government have given in this House recently of the punctuality of the repayment of loans in Ireland. Sir, it is a shameful slander to impute dishonesty to the Irish nation. Sir John Davies—no biassed Irish authority—long since recorded his belief in their love of equal and impartial justice. From the manner in which the opponents of this Bill have been carrying on the discussion, one would be led to imagine that it is an indispensable *sine quâ non* that those for and against this or any other measure must have been all their lives of the same way of thinking on the same subjects; that the merits of a question and the knowledge acquired by experience count for nothing, compared with the critical question as to what one said 20, 30, or 40 years ago on this or that subject. Surely that is the merest childishness, and not the way to approach the discussion of any question, much less a question involving the fate of nations, the happiness or misery of the millions composing the populations of these Islands. The fate and happiness of Ireland and the Irish race are, of course, in the chiefest degree concerned in this great question. But the connection between these countries and peoples is now so close that happiness and prosperity for Ireland must mean peace and friendly feelings for all; while if you are about to doom Ireland to a further period of torture, to 20 years of coercion, it is idle to think that Great Britain shall go free of the consequences. I trust, then, that a question of such magnitude, and involving consequences so grave, will no longer be handled in such puerile fashion as reading to the House the opinions Mr. So-and-So entertained on this question 20, 30, or 40 years ago. Sir, the Ireland of to-day and its circumstances are not those of 40 or 50 years ago, and men in everyday life act not upon the views of men and things they entertained in the dead past of 50 years ago, but upon the views they entertain of them in the living present of to-day. Among the opponents of this measure, the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) told us in this House, on the 9th ultimo, that he declined to join the Prime Minister in his proposal to examine and inquire into the Irish Question, for

"He felt that an inquiry of that kind could not stop short of action of some kind."

A peculiar piece of statesmanship surely on the part of one who, in Belfast, on the previous November, six months ago, pledged himself to a thorough reform of the Irish Government, and giving to Ireland large control of her own local affairs! The noble Marquess made on the same day—April 9—another remarkable pronouncement. He said—

"Whatever be the fate of this measure—the Irish Government Bill—its mere introduction by a responsible Government, by a Minister wielding, and justly wielding, the influence and authority of my right hon. Friend, will have done much which can never be recalled. This measure will henceforth be the minimum of the Irish national demand."

And, Sir, that is quite true. It is what all intelligent opinion, English and foreign, all over the world, is agreed upon. And is not the logical deduction from such a consensus of opinion this—that the postponement of the settlement between the two countries is to be deprecated by everyone having at heart the good—the best interests of these countries? Is the state of Ireland such as any wise or good man would like to see continued? What can one think of the statesmanship which, while acknowledging that the introduction by the Prime Minister of this Bill makes this measure henceforth the minimum of the settlement between England and Ireland, refuses even to examine the question, because, forsooth, such "examination must lead to action of some kind?" Surely this is to be compared only to the action of the ostrich, which tries to avoid danger by hiding its head in the sand. In his Opera House speech, on the 14th ultimo, the noble Marquess said he objected to the Bill "because it invalidated the Union between Great Britain and Ireland." Why, the only chance of a real Union between the countries is to be expected from this very measure. On no less terms can the Irish people consent to a Union. On the same occasion the noble Lord indulged in a number of "ifs"—

"If the sanguine hopes with which this measure has been introduced should be disappointed; if it should turn out that the statesmanship of Mr. Parnell and of the National League fails to solve those difficulties which have hitherto baffled and perplexed the statesmanship of British statesmen; if it should be found after trial—if it should be found that the poverty of Ireland is not removed, but rather increased—if it should be found that the law is not observed; if it should be found that injustice has been committed," &c.

A splendid style of argument surely! But could not that style of argument be turned against anything and everything? And, because one can start an "if" on the other side, is that to be held sufficient reason why the most grievous injustice is to continue undisturbed? But we can, after 85 years of bitter experience of the Union, say of it, without an "if," or any sort of hesitation, the sanguine hopes with which it was forced upon Ireland have been disappointed. The best statesmanship of England has failed to solve the difficulty created by it. It has been proved, after long and bitter trial, that the poverty of Ireland has been intensified by it; it has been found that that accursed Act of Union has made law hated in Ireland; it has been found that under it most grievous injustice has been done to Ireland. Mr. Giffen, a high English authority on financial statistics, shows strikingly and conclusively the results to Ireland of having her affairs recklessly exploited by Englishmen and Scotchmen, in the supposed interests of Great Britain, instead of being managed by Irishmen for the good of Ireland. Mr. Giffen shows that at the time of the Union, on the estimate of Ireland's wealth as compared with that of Great Britain, her quota of taxation was fixed at 2-17ths. Now, after 85 years of Union, he himself estimates that Ireland's gross income has fallen from that proportion of 2-17ths to about 1-20th; her capital to 1-24th, and her taxable resources to 1-50th of those of Great Britain. At the outset of his anti-Irish campaign the noble Marquess was very shy, lest he should be charged with allying himself with the Tory Party. He denied that the platform at the Opera House was a Tory platform. His opposition was so wanting in clearness of ring that, for a considerable time the Prime Minister evidently had hopes of him. But on the 18th instant, at Bradford, he boldly adopted the Tory views of this matter, and apparently he expects to carry his following into the Tory camp. He declared himself "an extreme opponent of Home Rule." He said—

> "The people of Ireland sent their Representatives to Parliament to obtain for them the land of Ireland for nothing, or next to nothing."

If he thinks 20 years' purchase nothing, it would be interesting to know what are his views of the real value of property, the bulk of which consists of the confiscated improvements of the tenants of Ireland. He assumed that—

> "In a few years the Irish people may repudiate every article of this contract."

In fact, he pretends to fear that the Irish people would think of nothing but how to do every possible evil—

> "He never swerved from equal justice to Irishmen and Englishmen."

And wound up that—

> "England has in the past striven to do, and has done, her duty to Ireland."

The position of the noble Marquess is, therefore, that of Lord Salisbury—each of them regarding Ireland from the point of view of the feudal aristocrat, who cannot bear to see his slave removed from his lash. It would be interesting if the House could learn to what extent the confiscated improvements of Irish tenants have been made to contribute to the swollen coffers of the House of Devonshire. Why, every fish that swims in the River Blackwater—for some 20 miles of its course, and for considerable distance into the sea at Youghal Harbour—must pay tribute to the Ducal Devonshire. It is easy to understand the noble Marquess's sympathy with the Landlord Orange Ascendancy Party. He is one of them. The attacks of these men upon Ireland are in their own interest, on more grounds than one. To those in the position of the noble Marquess the thought is not a far-fetched one—

> "When Irish landlords are bought out—how soon shall attention be turned upon English landlordism? It is not quite certain that we may get as good terms as are now offered to the Irish landlords—for Englishmen are apt to improve upon the lessons they learn—and a much closer scrutiny may be applied to our case; and obviously, then, the longer we can maintain landlordism in Ireland, the longer shall we postpone the evil day for land monopoly in England."

A word as to the "equal treatment of Irishmen and Englishmen," from which the noble Marquess has "never swerved." Some 15 years ago—in 1871, I think—he treated H.R.H. the Prince of Wales to a right royal spectacle. An amnesty meeting was held in the Phœnix Park—it was Sunday, and the weather being very fine the Park was crowded with men, women, and children; on a sudden, without warning, a large body of police, previously ambushed in contiguous hollow places, burst upon the scene, and with truncheons beat down the people most mercilessly, sparing neither age nor sex. We have not yet learned of his having treated the people of England after this fashion. I do not doubt he would if he dare. The opponents of this Bill have harped constantly upon the string—that the people of Ireland cannot be trusted with the powers proposed to be conveyed by this measure. It is assumed that the people of Ireland, if endowed with this Legislature, would at once procced to the making of all kinds of absurd and wicked laws—

> "Abolishing the crime of murder;" "confiscating property;" "cutting down to one-half interest payable to English and Scotch investors."

But, I presume, it is only of the Catholic majority this estimate is formed. I presume those gentlemen have trust and confidence in the Loyal Orange Landlord Party, who would form a powerful Party in the proposed Legislature, and endowed with a veto power which would make all legislation impossible so long as it would be unsatisfactory to them. Notwithstanding that, the Irish people would have every possible reason for conciliating that minority, in order to secure the harmonious working of their new Government. Notwithstanding that, the Irish people would be fully aware how closely and jealously they would be watched from this side of the Channel in the exercise of their new powers. Yet Lord Derby pretends to believe that the Irish people are the mad idiots and fools to wreck and ruin their new-found happiness — that for which they have striven so long, so patiently, and so persistently, and with so much self-sacrifice—and all for what? to gratify a spirit of religious animosity! I have repudiated the imputations on the part of the Catholics of Ireland, and every Protestant Member of our Party will endorse my repudiation. But to place this matter beyond dispute, with the permission of the House I will read an exceedingly interesting letter lately published in a Belfast newspaper—*The Northern Whig*; the writer of the letter is the Rev. Matthew Kerr, the Presbyterian minister at Cork. He writes—

> "Sir,—Can it be that Ulster Presbyterianism has no voice to raise on behalf of Ireland's claim to manage her own affairs? I cannot believe it. Presbyterians in Scotland, in England, and in America are speaking with no hesitating tone, and shall we be silent? We are loyal, but we will not be silent and allow the impression to go abroad that the Loyalists, Whig or Tory, speak for us. Let the sturdy farmers of Down and Derry, of Antrim and Tyrone, lift up their voice. The day for silence is past. I claim to have some right to speak on this question. All my ministerial life has been spent outside Ulster—in the West and in the South. I can fairly say that I have come into closer contact with the Roman Catholic people of Ireland than, perhaps, any minister of our Church; and, with this experience, spreading over a period of 35 years, I believe with all my heart that I am ready to intrust my civil and religious liberty to the Irish people with the fullest conviction that the trust will be safe in their keeping. The agitation that has raged so vehemently of late is the old agitation that began seven centuries ago, when England first conquered Ireland. It is in no sense with the Irish people a religious agitation. The feeling was as strong when England and Ireland were both Roman Catholic as it has been since England became Protestant, only that the religious difference has added a special acrimony to the future on both sides. The men who are hated most in Ireland to-day are Roman Catholics who have separated themselves from the national life, and have joined the English garrison. As Lord Spencer truly stated at Leeds, the trusted Leaders of the Irish people since the Union in 1800 have all been Protestant, with the exception of O'Connell. They who tell us that Home Rule means Rome Rule do not know Ireland, and have not studied, but in the surface, the present National movement. It is a National movement, pure and simple, except in Ulster, where Protestant prejudice has brought in the religious element. I was for a long time enable to understand the National feeling, brought up, as I had been, in a county Derry home, and educated entirely in Ulster. I tried to find out what was my native land. I could not find it. My friends and associates refused to be called Irishmen. Scotland could not well be my country, for my people had been out of it for more than two centuries. I settled down into the belief that I was an Ulsterman, and nothing more. Now I have learned to take all Ireland as my country, and I can feel the throbbings of patriotism within my breast. The National feeling is patriotism, and it is the most powerful factor in the settlement of the Irish Question. This patriotism, too, has had a wonderful influence in elevating the character of the Irish people, and kindling hope in their hearts through all the long years of their sad, sad history. I regret exceedingly that our Church, through the voice of her leaders, appears to be opposed at present to give to all Ireland the right to manage her own affairs. I regret, too, that some of my dearest friends are fighting, as I most firmly believe, not only against Ireland, but against our own Church interests. The mists of prejudice, however, are already beginning to scatter, and I believe that when the Assembly meets in June there will be a large body of both ministers and elders who will be prepared to do justice to Ireland. There is no ill-feeling in the South against Protestants. The strong, and I would say the ill-advised, language so often used in the North is not resented. All true Nationalists, Protestants, and Roman Catholics yearn to see a United Ireland—Ulster holding her own place in the front rank."

For myself, I believe that a very short period of Home Rule will suffice to disabuse the minds of the Protestants of the North of Ireland, and to entirely exorcise the demon of religious discord. If hon. Gentlemen who oppose this Bill can be supposed to fairly represent English and Scotch opinion respecting Ireland, the outlook is not very re-assuring, and the only result humanly possible would be that the lamentable internecine struggle must go on to the dreadful bitter end—to the irreparable misfortune of both countries. But, as far as we can judge, it does not appear that those Gentlemen do fairly represent the opinion on this question of the ruling power in these countries—the enfranchised democracy of Great Britain and Ireland. We therefore hope that, in this measure, the great statesmanship of the Prime Minister has laid the foundation of a satisfactory *modus vivendi*, and of lasting peace and goodwill between the two Islands. Is this Irish Question to be settled now, and in good temper, or is it to be prolonged still further, embittering the antagonisms of race and creed? Will you never agree to give to Ireland a good measure until it is too late to produce the desired results—too late to be accepted by Ireland in a thankful spirit? If the old struggle is to go on, our position has been incalculably improved by the introduction of this measure, by the debates in this House, of which the whole world has been the attentive audience, and whose sympathy has at length been attracted to the cause of

Ireland by the powerful championship of him who, by his great trumpet-blast has, ere now, caused the shackles to fall from the limbs of Bulgaria. Irish sympathy was strong in favour of Bulgaria, and rejoiced in her good fortune. I think it is doing no injustice to Bulgaria to say that the wrongs of Ireland are even more deserving of the sympathy of the friends of suffering nationalities as Ireland certainly has greater claim upon the sense of justice of the right hon. Gentleman, since it is the injustice perpetrated by his own country that is to be abated. There is an inducement for Great Britain to yield to Ireland this measure of justice, which is well worth the consideration of everyone who has at heart the fortunes of this Empire. If you are now ready to settle Ireland's claim on the terms named by your own Prime Minister, we are in a position to offer you the friendship of the whole Irish race all over the world. And anyone capable of valuing at its proper worth the establishment, on a firm basis, of friendly relations between Ireland and Great Britain—now so egregiously miscalled the United Kingdom—if he will read, with the interest they deserve, the words of John Boyle O'Reilly, addressed to a meeting of 10,000 Irishmen in Boston, will think more than once ere he votes against this Bill. The words are—

> "Mr. Gladstone has, in one day, softened the hatred engendered and increased by centuries of misrule in Ireland. He has astonished Irishmen themselves by demonstrating that it is possible for England still to win the hearts of Irishmen. I cannot speak for Irishmen, but I can speak for one Irishman, who was a rebel, that I respect, and honour, and love Mr. Gladstone for his offer to Ireland."

I, too, have been a rebel, and I sincerely accept and indorse the words of Boyle O'Reilly. You can now make friends and allies of those who have been lifelong rebels and enemies. Will you do so?

THE VICE CHAMBERLAIN (Viscount KILCOURSIE) (Somerset, S.) said, he asked the indulgence of the House in rising for the first time to address it, on two grounds. In the first place, fortunately or unfortunately, he happened to belong to one of those classes from whom the Irish people and the Irish Representatives had not found much sympathy; and, in the second place, he realized, as everyone must realize who rose in that House for the first time, how serious were the drawbacks of one who essayed to speak in that Assembly in such a position. But among the many disadvantages of new Members he recognized one great advantage. On the morrow of their debates men read with cool brains and calm feeling speeches which had been spoken, perhaps, with passion in the House; and those who had been in that position from 1880 to 1885 would be able, he ventured to think, to approach this great question with less prejudice, possibly, than older Members. They had not experienced a 40 hours' Sitting, or the many restless nights which old Members of the House had experienced. They had no old sores to heal, no disagreeable memories. In approaching this great question they were met on the threshold by two arguments—the one was that brought forward by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), who had pointed out how discontented the people of Ireland had been, and to some extent were—how turbulent they had been, and how riotous; and he seemed to give that as a reason why at this time little or nothing should be conceded to them. Shortly afterwards an hon. Member who represented an Ulster constituency had risen from the opposite Benches, whose argument against the measure had been that the people were prosperous, and that there had been a steady increase in their prosperity from 1854 to 1883 with regard to trade and commerce. History repeated itself strangely; and when he saw two hon. Members pointing out precisely different grounds why this measure should not become law, he was reminded of a strangely appropriate passage from Mr. Burke, where he had said—

> "If the people are turbulent and riotous nothing is to be done for them on account of their evil disposition; if they are loyal nothing is to be done, because their being quiet and contented is a proof that they have no grievances."

Mr. Fox had spoken of the happiness of the country as being the object which they should bear in mind. He said—"What is the end of all government? Surely it is the happiness of the governed." He had been astonished to listen to speech after speech in that House, in which the happiness of the country seemed to have been little thought of. The opinions of two other old Whigs—Mr. Sheridan and the great Lord Grey—had been quoted; and he hoped that he might be excused if he ventured still to hold the opinions which old Whigs had held, being himself a grandson of an old Whig who had been Secretary for Ireland, and having been imbued in early life with the ideas of the old Whigs. He wished to say a few words to meet the objections which had been brought forward by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale against the introduction of the Bill. It might be said that it would have been more appropriate to have done so at an earlier stage; but circumstances had happened since then which rendered it more easy to answer those objections now. One objection of the noble Marquess was that the constituencies had not been consulted. But they had not been consulted at the time when coercion had been proposed. To some extent, however, the constituencies had been consulted, because every Minister who held Office under the Crown had been before his constituency. Other Members had gone down to their constituencies, and resolutions had been passed and published in the papers, of which they understood the meaning. Then came a question which had been raised at the meeting in Her Majesty's Theatre by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Goschen). "Since how long," asked the right hon. Gentleman, "has Home Rule been the policy of the Liberal Party?" Since how long? Since circumstances had demanded it. That was the simplest answer which could be given to the simplest of questions. He had always thought that in advocating Liberal politics he was supporting a Party who were prepared to alter their policy as frequently as circumstances demanded. Even regarding the question from a Conservative point of view, was there not once a "Ten Minutes' Bill?" When he contested a seat some time ago he believed he spoke the mind of the old Liberal Party when he said that the Party desired the extension of the franchise, particularly in Ireland, on the ground that the views of the whole people might be heard. To-day, however, they were told that they were to listen, not to the 86 Irish Representatives in that House, but to the voice of one-fifth of the Irish people. Since how long had that been the policy of the Liberal Party? Again, he was told that he ought to go into the Lobby and vote for views contrary to those entertained by his constituents. Since how long had that been the policy pursued by the Liberal Party, and was it for this that the Caucus was formed? He occupied too humble a position to criticize the action of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain); but he might remark that the wisdom of our ancestors had never been more distinctly shown than when they selected as the motto of the Heir Apparent to the Throne the two simple words "I serve." It was thus that men were prepared for the exigencies of command. Till Saturday last it would have been true to say, with reference to the second reading of the Bill, that those who went into one Lobby wished to legislate for Ireland, while those who went into the other wished to legislate by the Irish people for Ireland. To-day he supposed they must give a different description of those who would occupy the two Lobbies. On the one side there would be those who believed the shameful acts of 1800, which brought about the Union between England and Ireland, ought to be blotted out by more honourable acts, and that a peaceful solution of the differences between the two countries should be found, while those who walked into the opposite Lobby would desire the resolute government of Ireland for 20 years. The noble Marquess the Leader of the Opposition (the Marquess of Salisbury) had explained what he said on that occasion; and it must be admitted that it required some explanation. How the division would go he, not being a prophet, was unable to tell; but this he knew—that if the division went against the Government, and an appeal were made to the country, no men sitting in any portion of that House would dread the result less than those who followed the Prime Minister.

MR. McIVER (Devon, Torquay): Sir, I do not propose to reply to the noble Viscount who has just sat down (Viscount Kilcoursie), partly because I am not aware that he has said anything calling for a direct reply, but chiefly in recognition of the fact that this debate has been a series of lectures and expositions of individual views rather than a connected discussion. My object in rising is to present to the House an expression of one shade of Liberal opinion and of Liberal dissent which has not yet found utterance in this debate—a shade of opinion distinctly friendly and anxious for a settlement of this question, but resting on a definite principle which may not be surrendered. It is a shade of opinion which is held by a group, not, perhaps, numerically large, but large enough, I believe, to sway the issue before the House. As one of the humblest of this group, I will try to put our standpoint before the House, premising merely that of course I am not speaking with authority for anyone but myself, although I am satisfied that I shall very fairly represent the views of the Gentlemen to whom I have alluded. Our position briefly is this. We accept Irish autonomy; we accept Home Rule; and we accept the establishment of a Legislative Assembly for Ireland as inevitable. Some of us receive it with a welcome; others of us regard it with misgiving; all of us accept it as inevitable. We believe Home Rule is the only solution, worthy of the name, of the Irish difficulty, and we believe that it is possible to give to Ireland legislative and executive autonomy without doing violence to the lines of the Constitution of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and without undue risk to the rights of the Irish minority. We believe that it is possible to achieve this only by a large trust in the Irish people, and that it is safe to undertake this only within the lines of the Constitution. That being so, the House will understand that we are very largely in sympathy with the sentiments of the Prime Minister as revealed in his speeches, and that our difficulty is that those sentiments find so little echo in the provisions of the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman's speeches breathe the most generous confidence in the good intentions of the Irish people; the speeches are devoted to unity; the speeches insist on finality. The Bill is stained in every clause, from cover to cover, with indications of mistrust; the Bill has no element of finality; the Bill not only gets rid of the ultimate supremacy of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, but it puts an end to that Parliament altogether. The continuance of that Parliament and of its ultimate supremacy is the principle for which we contend. We say that the Government has sacrificed finality in order to give legislative effect to somebody's mistrust, and that they were obliged to give effect to that mistrust because they had let go the supremacy of Parliament. This contention has been replied to in anticipation, somewhat defiantly, by the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Stansfeld), and very learnedly by the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce). The former says that all the Bill does is to "delegate a portion of the legislative powers of Imperial Parliament," and then he goes on to admit that it also "suspends a portion of the sovereignty of that Parliament." The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Stansfeld) challenged a reply from one learned in the law. I am not learned in the law; but, if I were, I should begin by asking him to be more precise in his terms. This Parliament in which we sit is not yet the Imperial Parliament in relation to the Three Kingdoms. The Crown is Imperial, and Parliament may be Imperial in relation to India and the Colonies; but in relation to the Three Kingdoms it is a Royal Parliament, and its legal title is the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. ["Oh, oh!"] Will hon. Members who question that statement point to a single Statute relating to the Three Kingdoms in which this Parliament is described as "Imperial?" My hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with more precision, lays down certain Constitutional propositions in support of the Government contention. He says —"We cannot divest ourselves of the supremacy," and "We cannot bind our successors." All that is true; but it is beside the point; for it is true of this Parliament, which will cease to exist, if this Bill becomes law. The Act of Union created the Parliament of which these propositions are true, and christened it in the Third Article of Union, "The Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland." This Repeal Bill substitutes for that Body a new British Parliament, which, n its 3rd clause, it christens the "Imperial Parliament." Viewed in this light, none of the arguments of these hon. Gentlemen apply. The new Imperial Parliament cannot "at any moment repeal" the Magna Charta of Ireland.

The only power it has is to galvanize the old Parliament of the United Kingdom into temporary existence, and for limited purposes. "Parliament cannot divest itself of certain powers." Then Parliament cannot pass this Bill. "We cannot bind our successors." Sir, we shall have no successors. This Bill not only proposes *felo de se*, but infanticide. This Parliament will have no legitimate successors, but only the bastard "Imperial Parliament," which does "not succeed to the title." The sovereignty and the supremacy in relation to Ireland, created in 1800, lapse with the withdrawal of the Irish Members. We regard the continuing supremacy of Parliament as at once the symbol and the substance of the Union; and we believe it to be not only compatible with, but essential to, a successful and workable scheme of Irish autonomy. We believe it to be absolutely necessary, in order to fulfil the Prime Minister's fifth condition, that this measure should be "in the nature of a settlement, and not merely a provocation to fresh demands." Why, Sir, the absence of this principle, the destruction of the ultimate supremacy of Parliament, has necessitated all those limitations and guarantees which the Orange Members ridicule, which the Nationalist Members detest. The absence of this principle, this supreme safeguard, has involved the introduction of the other so-called safeguards, which are at once impotent and irritating, which are both insulting and futile, which will cramp and fetter the working of the scheme, and will limit and narrow its power for good more than its power for evil. The absence of this principle has involved the endless and exasperating indications of that mistrust of the Irish people which, as I have said, discolour every page of this Bill. I remember the Prime Minister eloquently repudiated the imputation of distrusting the Irish people. I accepted the repudiation absolutely. I believe the Prime Minister does trust the Irish people; but if he trusts them sufficiently to grant them Home Rule, the forms of the Home Rule granted should embody that trust. The Prime Minister said—

> "The safeguards provided, as far as I am concerned, are not in consequence of mistrust entertained by me, but they are in consequence of mistrust entertained by others."

I venture respectfully to challenge the Prime Minister's right to assume that position. The Bill is his, with its many virtues, with all its faults. It is not open to him to say—"Its virtues are mine; its vices belong to the Gentlemen over the way; the trustfulness is mine; the distrust is theirs." We are considering the second reading, not of the Prime Minister's sentiments, which I honour and humbly share, but of the Bill with its merits and demerits, its twopennyworth of concession, and its bushel of mistrust. I contend that those indications of mistrust with which the Bill bristles, and which are pregnant with future danger, are due solely and exclusively to the sacrifice of the supremacy of Parliament. That sheet anchor of the Constitution has been slipped, and replaced by a dozen trumpery kedges, which will drag one by one. Supremacy is the real guarantee, and in its default these other paper guarantees are introduced to the utter destruction of any hope of finality. This supremacy is not a mere phrase. What I mean by the supremacy is this. Hitherto Parliament has been the final arbiter of all things in this Empire. Nothing has been over Parliament. Parliament has been over all things. What we ask is that Parliament should continue to hold its high Constitutional place as the ultimate Court of Appeal in Irish as in other matters. I may be asked, do I mean that every Act of the Irish Legislature shall be laid upon the Table of this House before it becomes law? No, Sir; I do not. My time in this House has been short, but it has been long enough to know that that would not do. It is necessary, if you mean business, to give the Irish Legislature a long tether. It is necessary and desirable to give a large measure of unfettered action to the Irish Legislature in relation to Irish domestic matters; and I fully recognize that it will be necessary to provide elaborately against the supremacy to which I cling being used or abused for purposes of factious or irritating interference. I recognize that danger; but I do not believe it is either impossible or difficult to provide against it. I would closely limit the classes of subjects and questions arising in the Irish Legislature which, in any case, could come before Parliament; and I would limit the manner in which they should be brought up. Furthermore, even such limited questions, admitted by such restrictive procedure, need not reach the full House until after close filtration through a Committee of this House, on which Ireland would be largely represented. I would leave to the Irish Assembly the final disposal of the great majority of the Irish questions, reserving only special subjects or classes of questions upon which a reference on appeal might, under strict limitations, be made to the Parliament of the United Kingdom. I would so limit this power of reference or appeal as to throw the entire responsibility on the Irish Legislature, that they should so conduct their work as not to come into conflict with the higher authority. I would so limit the power of that higher authority that so long as the Irish Legislature goes straight, so long as it does nothing repugnant to public law or the comity of nations, so long as it acts *intra vires* so long as it works within the principles of justice, equity, and good conscience it should be safe from interference. That, Sir, is what I mean by the supremacy of Parliament. It is a supremacy which might in time embrace other forms of local self-government extended to other parts of the Kingdom; it is a supremacy which is a real guarantee against real dangers; it is a supremacy based upon trust in the Irish people, and on our own Constitution. More, Sir; it is based on mutual trust—trust on our part that the Irish Legislature will "go straight;" trust on their part that we mean to give them a fair field. The continuance of that supremacy gives Ireland a peaceful resort in troublous times against herself; an appeal from Ireland drunk to Ireland sober. The Bill provides no appeal except physical force. I am not referring to the warlike talk about Ulster, but to military operations undertaken by Britain against Ireland. I join the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James) in earnestly deprecating that dangerous, foolish, and wicked talk about Ulster. When the Ulstermen have definite and specific reason for fighting, they may look for sympathy and substantial support in England and Scotland, but not before. I do not believe they ever will have that reason. If the supremacy be retained, and if this measure, modified as will then be possible, pass into law, I believe the Ulstermen will give it a trial, and that they will then find that those good intentions indicated by the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), whose sincerity no man in this House doubts, will be realized. And if they are not realized, you have the supremacy to fall back on. I believe that, with a workable scheme, the Nationalist Members would strive not only honestly, but even humbly, to conciliate the minority. But their good intentions are impotent so long as the scheme is fettered and unworkable, so long as you decline to rely on the one hand on a spirit of trust, and on the other on the supremacy of Parliament. The continuance of the supremacy to which I have referred involves Irish representation in this Parliament, and it involves their having a full voice in all subjects that come before this Parliament, except such British matters as correspond with those Irish matters dealt with by the Irish Parliament. The supremacy involves Irish representation, although Irish representation does not necessarily involve the supremacy. Here I may say a word to remove a possible misunderstanding. It is the craving for that supremacy which is at the root of the desire expressed by many hon. Members that the Irish Members should retain their seats. No doubt there are other good reasons; but we ask that Ireland should continue to possess a full right of representation at Westminster, chiefly in order to maintain the position of Parliament as the Final Court of Appeal. Much as the Irish Members have done in the past to endear themselves to this House, real and sincere as may be the personal affection with which we regard them, it is not so much from anxiety for their personal presence that we ask that they should be entitled to sit in this House, as for what that right involves. It is not that I am more Irish than the Irish. I can believe that they are indifferent to the charms of our society. I can believe that, in their earnest desire to attend to their domestic affairs, they are not anxious to come over here at present. Well, Sir, that is their affair. All I want is, that Ireland should continue to have her full voice in the Parliament of the United Kingdom, in order that the direct supremacy of that Parliament should be maintained—

not an intermittent voice, not a spasmodic or periodic voice, but a continued and a continuous right of representation; and if her Representatives stay away occasionally, or even habitually, and leave that duty to be fulfilled in their absence, that, too, is their affair. Our affair is the supremacy of Parliament. I agree with the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. William O'Brien) that the Irish know themselves and their wants better than we can. If they would like us to attend to their share of Imperial duty, well and good. If they are not scared by the phantom of taxation without representation, well and good. If even they think that such limited share of Irish Business as would come before this House can be safely intrusted to us in their absence, surely they ought to be allowed to judge of that. But we want Ireland to have its continuous right of representation in the Parliament of the United Kingdom, in order that the Parliament of the United Kingdom may survive, and with it may survive the ultimate supremacy. The Bill kills that Parliament, and replaces it for legislative purposes by a bastard Imperial Parliament, and for its other functions by a hybrid tribunal, within the Privy Council; with a vague veto, by a machinery of Address to the Crown, and the *impasse* of the two Orders in the Irish Assembly. We say restore the supremacy and you get rid at once of all necessity for all that complicated set of devices which mar and blemish the Bill, which deprive it of the nature of a settlement, and invite internal strife and continued agitation. We may be told that the sovereignty and supremacy of this Parliament survives, because, as has been hinted, the veto—that mysterious and undefined innovation—will be exercised on the advice of a British Ministry responsible to this Parliament, or rather to the residuum of this Parliament. If this is so, what does it involve? That the final disposal of Irish matters will vest in a Body in which Ireland is wholly unrepresented, and that, so far from this House being released to the discharge of other pressing duties, it will continue to be the battle-field of Irish politics; with this difference—that on any trifling Irish question may depend the fate of any British Ministry. Our system will become a Government by Vote of Censure. I can hardly believe that this is intended; but if the veto is designed to this end, then I say, why this hole-and-corner retention of the supremacy? Why not state it boldly in the Bill and in this House? And then we shall know where we are, and the hon. Member for Cork and his followers will know where they are. Sir, I have endeavoured to make clear what is my position in relation to this measure, and what I believe to be the position of many other Members on this side of the House, who, while friendly to the Home Rule principle of the Bill, are immovable on the great Constitutional principle of the supremacy of Parliament. How, Sir, has this conscientious dissent been treated from this side of the House? Very variously, Sir. The Prime Minister, with that fairness and breadth of view which we have learned to expect from him, has paid a just tribute to those of his followers who, with pain and possible penalties, find themselves obliged to differ from him. My hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has treated our scruples with similar generosity. But for the rest, both in and out of the House, we have been spoken of with contumely, with threats, and with scorn. We have been told by the senior hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) that we are playing the Tory game, and that we shall lose our seats. Is it impossible for the hon. Member to conceive that there may be Members who would endeavour to do that which they believed to be right without regard to either of those considerations? We are told that we are breaking up the Liberal Party, and that we shall find out the truth of that when we face our constituencies. A good many of us have faced our constituencies, and are not wholly dissatisfied with the result. It will never injure the Liberal Party to have men in its ranks who think for themselves, or who subordinate pleasure or self-interest to duty. The worst enemies of the Liberal Party are those who thus endeavour to stamp out individuality of judgment within its ranks; and the worst blow that can be dealt to Liberalism will be to root up its cardinal doctrine of freedom of conscience. When it is said that dissidents will be opposed at the General Election by Ministerial candidates, I wonder where they are coming from. It may be that those who are threatening the seats of others will have enough to do to look after their own. It has been suggested that the Bill should be read a second time and then withdrawn; but that suggestion was received with silence on the Nationalist Benches. Perhaps it appeared to the Nationalist Members to savour rather of the confidence trick. I understand their objection; they wish for a settlement of the matter. So do I; and I seek for a settlement very much in the direction in which they do. And now, Sir, how do we view the second reading of this Bill? The Prime Minister, in his recent Manifesto, and again somewhat indistinctly in his speech on Monday night, urged that the second reading of this Bill meant simply the acceptance of the principle of Home Rule. I wish most sincerely that I could accept that assurance, for in that case I should have infinite pleasure in voting for the second reading. But I fear it is not open to any Minister, however eminent, to put his own interpretation upon, or to assign a new significance to a stage of Parliamentary procedure. He cannot, on his *ipse dixit*, convert a Bill into an abstract Resolution. I accepted the principle of Home Rule on the first reading. I accepted that principle much as I believe it was understood by the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell). I now start with Home Rule as a postulate. The principle involved in this Bill, on which I shall give my vote on its second reading, is the maintenance of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, and the ultimate authority of that Parliament. The Bill kills that Parliament, and merely gives to the new Imperial Parliament it creates power to galvanize and resuscitate the old one for temporary purposes. If the Government will restore that supremacy they can widen the measure from an Irish point of view, and they can widen it towards finality. They can get rid of those features against which in Committee the Nationalist Members will, to use the words of the hon. Member for South Tyrone, "fight as hard as they can." They can simplify and widen it towards finality, whereas the absence of the supremacy has forced them to narrow it, until it is a step away from finality, until it is a direct challenge to fresh demands—and just demands—on the part of the Irish people. "Only breakfast," said one distinguished Irish patriot. ["No, no!"] Am I to understand from that contradiction that Mr. Davitt is not a distinguished patriot? For my part, I think he is—a very distinguished patriot.

Mr. PARNELL: Will the hon. Member allow me to explain for Mr. Davitt that what he said had reference to the fault found with Irishmen for seeking further concessions after the Disestablishment of the Church? He stated that it was perfectly right for the Irish people, after the Disestablishment of the Church, and after the passing of the Land Act, which they regarded as a breakfast, to look for a dinner in the shape of the present Bill.

Mr. McIVER: Without fastening the words on Mr. Davitt, I will adopt them for myself, and I will say that this Bill is a mighty poor breakfast, which involves further discussion and trouble. I desire to give the Nationalist Members a full day's rations at once, and have done with it. Recognize the supremacy, and you can do this. But the recognition of that supremacy must be specific and definite. Tell us that you will, in set terms, restore that supremacy, and at the eleventh hour you may save your measure. But you must recognize the immediate facts. The opposition in your own ranks has appreciably stiffened during the last week. The shattered hopes of last Monday week, and the "open mind" of the Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman), have only strengthened this tendency. Individual doubters have drifted further away from you, and nearer to one another. Community of interest and of self-defence has combined the dissenters. A community of principle has crystallized many forms of hesitancy into compact opposition. Those processes are going on. The sands in the hour-glass are running down. I would say respectfully to the Government you can give this pledge without loss of dignity. To us it is vital, while to you it is apparently an accidentally omitted detail. To you it is initiatory, to us it seems an essential principle. Its concession will be very welcome, even to many of those who will support you. In any case, it ought to be very welcome to the Nationalist Party, for it will give them a real instead of a paper Constitution. Give this pledge specifically, and I believe you will at once render a final settlement possible, and I believe you will rescue from its present imminent peril, and preserve to its great future usefulness, the united Liberal Party.

Mr. RATHBONE (Carnarvonshire, Arfon) said, that no one would deny that this was a subject on which the greatest deliberation should be exercised. The Americans took two years to settle their Constitution, and it was too much to expect that England could provide a new Contistution for Ireland in the course of two months. He had taken for 40 years a deep interest in Irish questions and Irish interests, and he was by no means so hopeless as many as to the possibility of a satisfactory arrangement which should place Irishmen in possession of a large measure of self-government. But while feeling this, he could not shut his eyes to dangers of the most serious character which were utterly unprovided for in the Government scheme. Provisions were wanting to carry out the principles laid down by the Prime Minister, not only for the protection of the rights of property of every description and interests of the British taxpayer, but to protect the Irish people themselves against most serious dangers. It would be useless to attempt to protect the rights of property, or ultimately the British taxpayer, from the action of the Irish Parliament unless we protected them and ourselves from the imposition of confiscatory rates or the contraction of unlimited debt by the Local Authorities. They all knew that the highest expectations would be formed by the Irish people of the benefits they were to receive at the hand of the State. One of the greatest dangers in Ireland would attach to the unlimited contracting of debt by Local Authorities. They had heard that night something of what the Irish people expected to get under this Bill. As soon as their legislation was within their own control they would expect roads, harbours, piers, tramways, manufactures — above all, outdoor relief. They would press on their Local Authorities expenditure in all these directions; and the consequent expenditure could only be met by borrowing, while the ultimate security for the loans must be the land and other fixed property. Unless, therefore, the property-owning taxpayers were adequately represented on the Local Governing Bodies of Ireland, and unless provisions restricting the power of borrowing—as it had been necessary in the United States—by Local Authorities to a certain proportion of the rateable value of the property in their district were inserted in the very Constitution or Magna Charta of Irish Government, what was there to hinder the most lavish, and, if lavish, certainly most demoralizing expenditure in all these ways? Now, whether the land were left in the hands of the landlords or acquired for the State by the use of English credit, it was the only security ultimately liable for these debts. England had stated boldly with respect to Egypt, and stated truly, that the first charges on the Revenues of a State were for securing the protection of the law and the maintenance of order, and for carrying on the absolutely necessary functions of government. The Irish National Government would, of course, insist on our carrying out that principle, and would claim to retain in Ireland the funds necessary for the primary functions of government. We could neither let the people starve in Galway any more than we could let them starve in India, nor could we allow anarchy to prevail in Ireland any more than in Egypt. England could not practically allow any part of the United Kingdom to lack the funds absolutely indispensable to guard against, say, a famine, or to maintain order or any of the institutions absolutely necessary for the preservation of civilization. So long as the unity of the United Kingdom was in any sense maintained we could not wholly divest the Imperial Parliament of responsibility for the welfare of Ireland. If we were to allow Ireland to recklessly incur public debts on the security of the land or other real estate to an extent which encroached on the revenues absolutely required to maintain efficiently such institutions, for instance, as those which dealt with Poor Law relief, the maintenance of the police, or the provision for education, we should have, not only to abandon our claim to the repayment of the loans proposed in the Land Purchase Bill, but also to find additional funds to rescue Ireland from insolvency. We could not by mere statutory declarations divest the Imperial Government of moral responsibility for the condition of Ireland, if we were to retain any form of direct or ultimate control over her government. But it was not the loss of British money which seemed to him to be the chief or the most serious danger. He believed that this country would make great pecuniary sacrifices if it believed that by so doing it could really promote the well-being of Ireland and make her a source of strength and honour instead of discredit and danger to the British Empire. It was not the loss of the money of this country that he principally dreaded, but the ruin and demoralization of Ireland from the lavish expenditure that would go on. He by no means attributed to Ireland what the Prime Minister called "a double dose of original sin;" but the right hon. Gentleman himself said that we had given Ireland little experience hitherto in local self-government. England and America had, perhaps, had more experience than any other countries in the world in the habits of self-government; yet each, America as well as England, had committed blunders in local expenditure which were frightfully demoralizing, and would be absolutely ruinous to a poor country like Ireland. He could show in a very few words how the experience of England and America, both long trained in the responsibility of self-government, both rich in material resources, should caution us against placing Ireland in a position where she would be almost certain to commit blunders which would return her on our hands at the first period of famine or distress, impoverished, encumbered, and, worst of all, with her population demoralized by unwise expenditure of public money and contraction of debt which the taxpayers of this country would have to meet. Let anyone look at the Report of the English Poor Law Commissioners of 1834. The farmers of that day thought that by outdoor relief—that was, relief in aid of wages—they could benefit themselves and throw upon the landowners some part of the expense of the cultivation of the land. The result was that perhaps few countries had ever been brought nearer to the brink of utter ruin, moral as well as material, than the whole agricultural community of England was in 1834. The Commissioners said that the system practically destroyed all those virtues for the possession of which the English nation had hitherto been so remarkable, that it destroyed the ties of family affection, parents deserted their children, and children refused to maintain their parents. It made bastardy profitable, and destroyed the purity of women; and though the Commissioners said that not many cases of the actual dereliction of estates had been stated to them, yet they did mention the case of one parish in which the expense of maintaining the poor had swallowed up the whole value of the land. Why, it required a generation of the tremendous centralized despotism of the new Poor Law Board in a measure to redeem the agriculturists of this country from the material and moral degradation into which they were sinking under unwise and extravagant expenditure. Then had America, with all its experience in self-government, found that it could do without the checks which were wanting in this Bill on a system of local expenditure? Between the years 1870 and 1880 there was apparently a great reduction in local indebtedness, but unfortunately it arose from compromise and repudiation; and, notwithstanding this experience, we found that in nine of the principal towns in one of the oldest and steadiest States in the Union—New Jersey—the annual charge for debt was now equal to the whole expense of carrying on their local government, and in two towns the amount of debt was equal to one-half the whole capital value of the taxable property. So much had this been impressed upon the public mind in America that State after State had introduced into its Constitution the most stringent limitations upon borrowing and rating powers. In Illinois no Local Authority could become indebted to an amount, including existing indebtedness, exceeding 5 per cent on the capital value of the taxable property in its district; and, before incurring any indebtedness within that limit, the Local Authority was obliged to provide for a direct annual tax sufficient to pay the interest and principal of that debt in 20 years from the time of its contraction. Ten States, including New York, had adopted similar safeguards against excessive rating. All spoke of these restrictions as having worked satisfactorily. He was sure everyone who had had experience of the difficulties and dangers of local government would be glad to see such restrictions existing in all parts of the United Kingdom; but they would be almost indispensable in launching Ireland on her new course of self-government. The British taxpayer would certainly be right in demanding that he should not be exposed to the almost certainty of having enormous sums to pay which, instead of benefiting, would demoralize his Irish fellow-countrymen. He had certainly not approached this Bill from any strong Opposition point of view, or in the interests of the well-to-do classes to whom the Prime Minister had recently alluded. The classes that engaged his deep interest were the poor tenants and labourers of Ireland; and if he felt the gravest misgivings respecting the effect of these measures, it was not only or mainly because he feared injury to the physical well-being, but because he dreaded demoralization, which would make it almost impossible to raise them out of misery and poverty. And he must remind the House that nothing could be more fatal to the development of mercantile and industrial enterprize in Ireland, to which they must mainly look for the means of supporting her population, than any expenditure which would threaten it with taxation calculated to make Ireland unable to compete with the industries of other countries. He listened with the deepest interest and attention to the speech of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon). He was quite right when he pointed out that he and his Colleagues would be the first sufferers if they were foolish enough to plunge into mad excess at the risk of ruining their country, and he did not doubt at all their perfect honesty and sincerity of intention to carry out their pledges; but he would urge them to consider that it would be absolutely impossible for them to do so unless their hands were strengthened by the provisions of the Bill itself to enable them to resist the pressure which would be brought to bear upon them arising out of the expectation, utterly impossible of realization, which would be formed by their countrymen of the results to be derived from this measure. There was one point which he did not think had received sufficient notice. He meant the withdrawal, when it was most needed, of the tried experience and independence of the Judicature and Civil Service of Ireland. He believed that under a democratic form of government there was nothing more essential than an experienced, reliable Civil Service. Half the mistakes and discredit at times attached to the State legislation and local government of America were traced by the best citizens of the Union to the degradation of its Civil Service and Judicature which arose since General Jackson's Presidency from the practice of changing all the civil servants of the State whenever one political Party succeeded the other in the government of the country; and at this moment the most earnest efforts of American patriots were devoted to obtaining again for their country a pure, experienced, and independent Civil Service and Judicature, such as this country had the happiness to possess. It appeared to him to be most unwise to withdraw them from Ireland just at the moment when their assistance and continuity of experience were essential for the success of the new measure. He also thought that the Bill ought to have enumerated the matters which were to be delegated to the Irish Parliament rather than those which were to be excluded from its authority; for in a Bill, however carefully drawn, they might find some serious omissions, and it was easier to add to the powers intrusted to the Parliament of Ireland than to withdraw any of them that had been given. Again, the veto seemed to him to be one that ought to be exercised with the support of some Representative Council if it was to be any protection against violent and dangerous legislation. Lastly, it seemed to him worthy of consideration whether the Home Rule Bill should not be passed with a clause suspending its operation except as regarded the meeting and legislative functions of the Irish Parliament until after that Parliament had met and passed organic laws for local government as to land and taxation, and until after such laws had received the Royal Assent. Such laws might be made unalterable for a term of years as regarded their leading Constitutional provision except with the consent of a two-thirds majority of the Irish Parliament as well as the consent of the Queen in Council for Ireland. After such laws had been passed there would be less danger of violent and oppressive action, and the new Irish Executive would be started under conditions which would have tested the moderation of the Irish representation. At the same time Acts so passed by them would be less likely to be regarded with jealousy than Acts of the same kind passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom. To meet the difficulties which had been pointed out in this debate surely more time, deliberation, and consultation were required than this Bill could have received. The hon. Member for Longford (Mr. Justin M'Carthy) urged the danger of delay; but was there not danger from hurry? Great as the Prime Minister's abilities were—and no one had a higher opinion of them than he had, for he had followed the right hon. Gentleman for 40 years—yet it was impossible that he, or anything short of omniscience, could in the time he had had, under the pressure which he admitted to have acted, and with access to the limited advice of a few friends, have prepared a measure duly guarding against the difficulties and dangers which must be guarded against if it was to cure and not add to the evils with which it proposed to deal. If, with his great intellectual and all the official and other information at his elbow the Prime Minister had failed to meet all these difficulties and dangers, was it fair to expect that those who saw these difficulties and dangers should be bound, without much time and thought to propose offhand the necessary remedies? Surely the only chance of dealing safely and effectually with this question was to bring to bear upon it with deliberation and sufficient time for consideration the experience and wisdom of the whole country through its Representatives. It would be impossible in any circumstances to carry this Bill through this Session; and it did seem grievous to him that some plan could not be found to unite the different sections of the Liberal Party all anxious to see this question settled, some plan to give time to bring to bear upon it the experience and ability of the House. He could not regard without dismay the prospect of this Bill being referred to the judgment of the country with the constituencies in the present state of perplexity. An Election fought upon a question raising such vast issues and so little understood, on which Parties were so split up and disunited, could not fail, he feared, to raise an amount of bitterness and class antagonism, not in Ireland only, but in England, which would sadly diminish the prospects of a safe and harmonious working of our new democratic Constitution. What was wanted beyond everything at the present moment was more time for Ministers, more time for this House, and more time for the country to consider one of the most difficult, one of the most perplexing questions ever submitted to the consideration of any people. How that object was to be secured he left their Leaders to suggest. It was not necessary that they should shelve the consideration of all Irish remedies. It appeared to him that they might be doing good work in the meantime by attempting to deal with the agrarian question by legislation which by common consent must come into operation concurrently with the measure for the government of Ireland. They need not underrate such a vast measure as the Land Purchase Bill, applicable to all Irish lands; but they might deal first with the small tenancies, and thus dry up one of the great sources of Irish misery and discontent. These small tenancies ought first to be dealt with. The Prime Minister had pointed out the impossibility of proceeding otherwise than gradually in carrying out his measure; and in the time necessary to deal with this portion of the subject they should acquire experience and be able to give full consideration to the question and decide whether it was necessary to go further.

Sir ROPER LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.) said, that there was one point connected with this great discussion as to which he most respectfully claimed a hearing on account of the treatment which he experienced in regard to it in the recent electoral contest. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), the right hon. Member for South Leeds (Sir Lyon Playfair), and other hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite, threatened Gentlemen of their own Party who opposed the Bill with the wrath of their constituents, and would lead the House to believe that the opinion of the rank and file of the Liberal Party was in favour of the Home Rule policy of the Prime Minister. An incident in his own electoral experience would dispel that idea. In the constituency which he had the honour to represent (North Kensington) there was an Irish Club, numerically not very strong, but containing several gentlemen of great political activity and intelligence, whose friendship he was proud to possess, even when he differed from them on political points. At the inception of the recent electoral contest they passed a resolution, which they communicated to him and to the candidate on the other side, that they would vote exactly according to the direction of their Leaders in that House, and that nothing which the candidates could say or do would in the slightest degree influence their decision. He was free to say that seemed a very honourable way of putting it, for it held out to the candidates no temptation whatever not to proclaim the opinions which they conscientiously entertained. These Irish gentlemen invited both himself and his opponents to address public meetings in their club-room, and he availed himself of the invitation. The very next day he was honoured with a letter in *The Times* from a "Moderate Liberal," in which he was denounced and held up to execration as a Home Ruler. The denunciation spread from *The Times* to the whole Liberal Press of England, Scotland, and Ireland. He was denounced, not only by Liberal journals, such as *The Scotsman*, which were consistent opponents of the policy of the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister, but also by Liberal papers which supported that policy. *The York Herald* said—"The issue of the circular by the Sarsfield branch of the Irish National League inviting members to rally round Sir Roper Lethbridge shows how the game is being played." That stated that he was "playing a game," though the circular simply called a public meeting to hear him address it. But this was the point to which he would call special attention. *The York Herald*—this supporter of the Home Rule policy at the present moment—said, on October 10—"It is absolutely useless for Lord Salisbury to endeavour to win the confidence of the Moderate Liberals when his followers openly coalesce with Irish Separatists." He at once wrote to *The Liverpool Mercury* and other papers to explain and justify his position, as he was ready to do again at any moment. He hoped the House would allow him to read a line. He said—

> "Why should you hold me committed to National League views, or 'Boycotting,' or anything else, by my addressing the electors in the room of the Sarsfield Club, when you do not hold me committed to forward Cobden Club views, when I did precisely the same thing in the Cobden Club?"

And his letter, which appeared also in *The Western Morning News*, further stated most clearly the position he had assumed at the Irish Club; and he might, perhaps, be permitted to read the statement—

> "I believe my views to be in strict accordance with those of Lord Salisbury, being broadly in favour of the most complete measure of local self-government for Ireland that may be found compatible with the absolute and unquestioned maintenance of the unity of the Empire (these words will appear in my election address)."

He asked the House to draw from that incident the conclusion which seemed to be perfectly obvious, that the whole Liberal Press throughout the country endeavoured to secure the success of his opponent, and to prevent himself from winning the seat for North Kensington, on the supposition that his opponent was a champion of the unity of the Empire. It was notorious that the very same thing happened in many other constituencies, and that in some other constituencies it succeeded. How, he asked, would it be possible for hon. Members opposite, elected on these terms and with these professions, to vote for the Bill of the Prime Minister? He held resolutely by the terms of his election address, and asked for the unquestioned maintenance of the unity of their glorious Empire. Would the measure now before the House secure the unquestioned maintenance of the unity of the Empire? That measure was questioned not only on the Tory Benches, but by every section of the Liberal and the Radical Party. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) and his Friends had themselves questioned that measure. They had objected to its financial arrangements. They had objected to tribute being paid by Ireland without representation—[*Cries of* "No, no!"]—or if they had assented to it to a certain extent, they said that their assent had been purchased by a payment of £1,400,000 a-year. Would they for such a sum barter the inalienable rights of a free people? He did not wish to impugn the motives of Irish Members below the Gangway; but he asked them whether that measure could be a final one when it left Ireland in the position of a tributary Province, prohibited the Irish nation from endowing the religion of the majority as Englishmen and Scotchmen had the religion of their majorities endowed, and would impose on them a number of other restrictions which certainly would not be acceptable for any length of time to the people whom hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway represented? Englishmen and Scotchmen were determined that the future of this great Empire should be as glorious as its past, and they called on hon. Members below the Gangway and the whole of their Irish fellow-subjects to be sharers with them of that glorious future.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): Mr. Speaker, I shall make no apology to the House for addressing it for a short time on the subject of the present measure, not merely because my name is on the back of the Bill, but because it is well known to my Friends that for five or six years past I have held a strong opinion that the Irish ought to manage their own affairs. And it is satisfactory to me to be able to say that before the last General Election I placed before a body of Englishmen, my former constituents, in the clearest manner I could, my opinion that the time had come when Ireland should be granted that power. I stated what were, in my view, the internal affairs of Ireland which might be fairly intrusted to an Irish Legislature, distinguishing in detail what were, in my judgment, Irish local affairs and what were Imperial affairs. Now, the Bill which I have had some share in preparing and bringing in adopts precisely the division between Irish affairs and Imperial affairs which I then described. Therefore, I have nothing to repent or to apologize for; but I have only to do my best to explain why I have taken these views, and to give the best information I can to the House as to the certain results of this Bill. Three questions have been raised during the course of the debate to which, I think, an answer should be given. First, does the Bill repeal the Union? Secondly, does it abrogate the unity of the Empire? And, thirdly, does it qualify in any way the sovereignty of Parliament? These three points have been argued and debated by my hon. Friends on this side of the House and by our opponents on the other, and I now propose to give a short answer to each of them. In the first place, does this Bill qualify the supremacy of Parliament? The hon. and learned Member for Inverness-shire (Mr. Finlay) has to-night attempted to get rid of the powerful arguments which my hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) placed before the House the other night. My hon. Friend the Under Secretary had argued that while the legal supremacy of Parliament would be unaltered, morally only and Constitutionally would it be debarred from dealing with the domestic affairs of Ireland as long as the Irish Legislature kept within the powers granted to them. The hon. and learned Member appears to me to have failed to controvert this position so powerfully taken up by the Under Secretary. I will endeavour, in one sentence, to show to the House how, at any rate, from the analogy of former writers, such a proposal as ours does not in any way qualify the sovereignty of Parliament. The proposals in the Bill are far within the division between the powers of Grattan's Parliament and the English Parliament of that day. But although that is the case—and it will be my duty in the course of a few minutes to say something on the point—if you look through the publicists and writers on Constitutional questions during the period of Grattan's Parliament, you will never find a suggestion that the sovereignty and omnipotence of the British Parliament was diminished because of the concession made in 1782 by the repeal of 6 *Geo.* I. That Act distinctly, on the part of Great Britain, gave up entirely to Ireland the power of legislating for Ireland. Yet, though that was done in 1782, in 1784 no one wrote more powerfully in favour of the absolute supremacy, or, as it was then called, the omnipotence, of Parliament—using the curious expression that Parliament could do everything except make a man a woman or a woman a man—than Mr. De Lolme, who, at the time I am referring to, was fresh from examining the recent arrangement with regard to Ireland. In his view, nothing had been done with respect to the Parliament of this country to qualify its omnipotence in legislating for Ireland. As to the unity of the Empire, my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James) argued strongly that if this Bill were passed the unity of the Empire would be gone. In the latter part of his speech my right hon. and learned Friend was a little confused between the unity of the Empire and the unity of the Kingdom. But in the earlier part of his speech he argued as to the unity of the Empire. Going back again to the experience of those who had to speak and write about the unity of the Empire during Grattan's Parliament, I cannot trace a suspicion on their part that there was not a complete unity of the Empire. On the contrary, Sir, in the Speech from the Throne, for which Mr. Pitt was responsible, in 1796, proroguing the Irish Parliament, one of the most effective passages referred expressly to the unity of the Empire as it then existed. Mr. Pitt's Cabinet said—

> "Great Britain and Ireland form one Empire; they are inseparably connected."

If, Sir, that were the case when the absolute division of powers existed between the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland, how much stronger will be the case when the Parliament of Great Britain will still be the Imperial Parliament, though we shall have granted, as this Bill proposes to grant, limited powers to a Legislative Body in Ireland? Then I come to the third question, which has been a good deal discussed, and towards the solution of which I should like to contribute a few words. It is argued that by this Bill we are proposing the repeal of the Union. Are we proposing to repeal the Union? We must first of all remember what the Union is. The Union is the result of an Act of Parliament passed in 1800, under which, at the beginning of 1801, the Irish Parliament was altogether swept away, and the legislative powers with respect to the whole United Kingdom were vested in the Parliament of the United Kingdom. What I wish to show to the House is that the present Bill does not repeal the Act of Union. On the contrary, very large powers which the Act of Union centred in the Parliament of this country will still be retained by the Parliament and the Government of this country, and are not proposed to be ceded to the Legislature of Ireland. Let me take them one by one. Under the former state of things, before the Act of Union, the Parliament of Ireland claimed and exercised authority to deal with matters affecting the Crown. For instance, it claimed to deal with the question of the Regency in 1789. By the present Bill any Act of the Legislature of Ireland with respect to the Crown—the word "Regency" is expressly mentioned—is specially barred and cannot take place. In the second place, the former Parliament of Ireland, up to the time of the Act of Union, had the entire control of the Customs and Excise and the Revenue derived from these two sources. In the present Bill any control over Customs and Excise by the Irish Legislative Body is expressly refused. Then, Sir, under the former Parliament the highest Court of Appeal in Irish cases was in Dublin; and those who have studied the history of the change which took place in 1782 know how much that was the subject of controversy. What is done under the present Bill? Not only is the Privy Council at Westminster to be the judge of questions whether any Act of the Irish Legislature or any proceeding taken under an Act of the Irish Legislature is void or not, but the ultimate Court of Appeal in Irish cases remains where it is now—in the House of Lords at Westminster. Therefore, in that respect, undoubtedly, there is no repeal of the Union. Then, again, under the state of things which existed up to 1801 there was no Court in Ireland either appointed by the English Government or responsible to the English Parliament. In the present Bill the Irish Court of Exchequer will be appointed by the British Government, and will be responsible to it in the sense of no Judge being removable except by Address from the English House of Commons and the English House of Lords. Then, again, under the former state of things the Parliament of Ireland had cognizance of all Treaties, and could legislate with respect to Treaties between the Crown and Foreign Powers. By the present Bill that power is expressly denied. Under the former state of things—that is, before the Union—the Irish Parliament might have legislated as to trade, as to questions of legal tender, as to weights and measures, and as to copyright and patents. All these powers are expressly denied in the present Bill. And, finally, the Irish Parliament exercised a limited control over the Army—especially in respect of recruiting, which on several occasions it exercised most liberally for the purposes of the Empire—over the Militia and the Yeomanry, and it had a voice in the Appropriations for the Services. Under the present Bill these powers are not granted to the Irish Government, which will have no cognizance of military affairs, and no control over them. In all these respects, then, the difference is very great between the powers of the old Irish Parliament and the powers of the Irish Legislative Body which we propose. But there is, on the other hand, something that is far more valuable to Ireland in this Bill than all those powers. That is to say, that whereas under the former state of things the Executive Government of Ireland was a branch of the British Government, and the Members of the Executive were appointed practically by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet in London. in future the Executive Government in Ireland under this Bill will be responsible to the Legislature of Ireland, precisely as the Executive Government here is responsible to the Legislature of this country. In my opinion, the powers to which I have referred, as not being granted to Ireland by this Bill, are far less important for the purposes of Ireland than that power of governing herself, as well as legislating for herself, which it is proposed to grant to her by her Executive Government being a Government responsible to the Irish Legislature. That is my answer to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Inverness-shire (Mr. Finlay), who spoke of the degrading character of our proposals to Ireland, and which he said would reduce Ireland to a mere Dependency. Although the Bill does not give those powers which Irishmen do not ask for, it gives what is far more important—an Executive control over their own affairs. These are differences, and real differences, between the former state of things and the future state of things as we propose them, and they justify me in saying that we do not propose to repeal the Union. What we propose to do is to substitute something else for some of the provisions of the Act of 1800, and to establish a better balance of power than existed between the years 1782 and 1801; and this, in my opinion, will result in far greater satisfaction to the people of Ireland than even the powers which they enjoyed before the Union. We give to Ireland autonomy—I do not mind criticism on that word, for I think it is a very good expression — autonomy in the internal affairs of Ireland, and the unity of the Empire and the Kingdom in matters of common interest remains, as I have tried to prove to the House, absolutely intact if the Bill which we offer should receive the approval of Parliament. But, Sir, I may be asked this question—"You propose a fresh division of power between England and Ireland, and a different division of the power than that which existed between 1782 and 1801, when the Union between Great Britain and Ireland was effected; how is that division affected by the arguments which were used at the time to justify the Union of the two Parliaments under the proposals made by Mr. Pitt?" Now, I think that that question is one that should be answered. Both in 1799 and 1800, the subject of the Union was discussed at very great length in the Parliament of Ireland and in the Parliament of this country; and I think it is important that we should see whether this Bill fairly meets the arguments for the Union which were put forward by the English Government, especially in the year 1799. I should like to refer hon. Gentlemen who may desire to verify the arguments I am about to use, to two great debates in Parliament on the 23rd of January and the 31st of January, 1799, when the whole bases and grounds of the Union were very carefully and fully put before Parliament by Mr. Pitt and by other Members of his Government, and when, at the end of those two debates, the Parliament of Great Britain, by a large majority, adopted the Resolution that formed in the following year the bases of the Union. I have gone very carefully through the two great speeches of the 23rd of January and the 31st of January, 1799, which were made by Mr. Pitt. In 1800 the whole matter had been argued out, and the debates had reference to the details of the Bill; but in 1799 a great debate on the question as to whether the Union was desirable took place. I have been anxious on this matter to master, as far as possible, the main arguments which were used by Mr. Pitt in support of the Union, and I will ask the House to consider how they affect the measure which we now ask Parliament to adopt. Mr. Pitt had to convince the Parliament of Great Britain that the Union was desirable and necessary. He had six great reasons which he urged with surpassing eloquence on the House of Commons for the adoption of his proposals. His second speech, on the 31st of January, 1799, was the greater of the two. A more masterly collection of arguments for the proposal which he made to Parliament I think it would be difficult to find. His first reason — and that appears rather in his speech of the 23rd of January—was that the difference which had been found to exist on the Regency Question made it absolutely necessary, as between the two countries, that the Parliaments should be united. That difference could not exist under the present Bill; and, therefore, that argument in favour of the Union and against any power being given to Ireland to manage her local affairs, entirely falls to the ground and cannot be applied to the present Bill. The second argument of Mr. Pitt was this—and it was based on the failure of Ireland to conclude a Commercial Treaty with Great Britain in 1785—that in 1782, when the Act was passed establishing the independence of Grattan's Parliament, it was expected to be followed by another Act to be passed by the Irish Parliament, establishing commercial relations between the two countries. Mr. Pitt urged that, as the Irish Parliament had failed to carry out what was understood in 1782, it was necessary to insure a complete union between the two countries. I need not tell the House that that argument, at any rate, has no force now, because, under the present Bill, no Commercial Treaty would be necessary between England and Ireland, and because the Bill itself provides for free commercial relations between England and Ireland. The third reason given by Mr. Pitt was that there were, under the Constitution of the two countries, two Parliaments with—to use his own words—

> "Distinct powers on questions of peace and war, of alliances and confederacies."

I need not tell the House that that argument does not apply now, because the Bill gives no power whatever in questions of peace and war. The next argument used by Mr. Pitt was that Ireland would gain thereby free trade with Great Britain. Ireland, as I have just said, has free trade with Great Britain, and therefore that is no objection to the proposals contained in the present Bill. Then it was argued that by the Union the Roman Catholics would gain by Catholic Emancipation becoming an Imperial, instead of a local, question. Of course, that argument has no force now, when Catholic Emancipation has long prevailed all over the Empire. Therefore, it has no connection with the present proposal. The sixth argument was that the existing military system was fraught with danger, since Ireland, having control over the Army, might declare any war in which England engaged unjust, extravagant, and hostile to freedom. On that ground Mr. Pitt proposed that the double authority which then existed should come to an end, and that the Union should be established. It is now well known that this question respecting the Army was the main reason why Mr. Pitt proposed the Union. Anyone who reads the debate which took place at the time will see that this was wrapped up in general expressions as to the military operations. But since then we have had published the correspondence of eminent men who were living at the time, and it clearly appears that the question of the Army was that which chiefly influenced those who urged the Union. I should like to explain shortly what was precisely, at the time, the controversy upon the question, and how it was solved. Lord Lansdowne, in the House of Lords, during the debate of 1799, gave in a single sentence what he thought was the general position of matters, especially as far as the Army of the United Kingdom was concerned. He used these words, which are germane to the whole question—

> "Unless there was such a union of the two countries as would enable us to say there was but one Army, chaos must ensue in the affairs of the British Empire."

Now, what was the state of the Army which we now know was so dangerous at that time? There is ample evidence now forthcoming that the real justification for the Union was the chaotic state of the Army in Ireland. We have on the subject two sets of Papers, published 50 or 60 years after the Union—the Memoirs of Sir Ralph Abercromby, and of Lord Cornwallis, who was Lord Lieutenant. With the leave of the House, I will read some extracts from these letters, because they put the case as to the condition of the Army in an unmistakable form. In the first place, I will refer to the letters of Sir Ralph Abercromby; and I need not tell the House what a distinguished soldier he was, and how his memory is respected to the present day in Ireland, where he was the penultimate Commander-in-Chief before the Union, for the great interest he took in that country. I will only read one or two sentences. Sir Ralph Abercromby said—

> "The efforts to correct abuses in the Army were entirely thwarted by the powerful influence of the magistracy and gentry. . . . The magistracy and resident proprietors, who shrank from the performance of their own duties, were constantly urging that the troops should be at their call for the purpose of enabling them to harass and oppress the people. . . . The magistrates encouraged and promoted the licentiousness of the troops and the oppression of the people. . . . The country gentlemen and magistrates do not do their duty, but ruin the troops by calling upon them to afford personal protection. . . . Discipline suffers exceedingly from the dispersed state of the Army, and many of the regiments could not take field. . . . The Cavalry are in general unfit for service, and more than half the Infantry are dispersed over the face of the country. The Army is in a state of licentiousness which must make it formidable to everyone but the enemy. The Army has been thrown into the hands of a faction, and has been made a tool under their direction. Within the last 12 months, every crime, every cruelty that could be committed by Cossacks or Calmucks has been transacted here. . . . The way in which the troops have been used would ruin the best in Europe."

And then Sir Ralph Abercromby quotes a General Order of May 7, 1798, in which there is this passage—

> "Troops having been placed at free quarters the General Officers are ordered to double, triple, and quadruple the number of soldiers so stationed to be moved from station to station until it is reported to the General Officer by the gentlemen holding landed property . . . . that all rents are completely paid up."

Is it to be wondered at that just before the Union, writing to an Irish friend, Sir Ralph Abercromby should have said—

> "Long observation has convinced me that all your misfortunes, all the evils with which you are threatened, proceed from the illiberal, the unjust, and the unwise conduct of England, from the wretched system of English domination."

Those are the words of a very distinguished soldier, who had seen service in every part of the world, and who was at the time Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Ireland—a duty which he exchanged for a great command in Egypt, where he died gloriously for his country. He felt it his duty to put these opinions, as to the Army, on record. It appears to me that this account of the total failure of the military system is a strong argument, if argument be wanted, against the idea of another 20 years of coercion. Well, Sir, I have gone through these passages in order to show what was the state of the Army in Ireland before the Union, and how that condition of the Army was the main cause which led Mr. Pitt to urge the Union upon the Parliaments of the two countries. Is it possible now? Under the Bill we propose the Irish Legislature will have no concern with the Army nor with the Irish Executive.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): What is the ground for that argument?

MR. CHILDERS: I argue it because it is according to the words of the Bill now before the House. If the noble Lord studies the Bill, he will find it is proposed that neither the Executive nor the Legislature of Ireland shall have any part in, any control over, or any concern with, the government of the Army. It was the bad government of the Army, and the condition to which it was brought, that was the most powerful argument in favour of the Act of Union. These are Mr. Pitt's six great reasons in favour of the Union. They are mixed up, no doubt, with some reference to the Republican state of affairs on the Continent; but Mr. Pitt never attributed to the Irish Parliament any sympathy with Republicanism. What he did was to urge strongly on Parliament that such being the state of the demoralization of the Army, and its failure to protect us from foreign attack, owing to certain official acts, it was necessary for the public safety—I am not arguing whether he was right or wrong—that the Union should take place. What I say is that not one of Mr. Pitt's arguments affects the present question. The proposal we make for a Legislative Body in Ireland is one which does not give them one single power which, as Mr. Pitt said, had caused so much mischief, and had rendered union necessary. So much for the arguments which I have ventured to put to the House, not at too great length I hope, from the policy and able speeches of Mr. Pitt when he conducted the arrangements for the Union between the two countries in 1799 and 1800. And now a word on the other side of the question. If, then, these arguments fall to the ground and we have to look for fresh ones, I ask is there any danger now in conceding the powers proposed by the Bill, or, rather, is there not greater danger in refusing them? The House will, perhaps, allow me to refer to my own experience. On a small scale, I have seen in one of the Dependencies of this country what, to a certain extent, has influenced me in arriving at the conclusion I have arrived at with respect to the power the present Bill proposes to give to an Irish Parliament the power of self-government in Ireland. I was a resident in Australia 30 years ago, and I was a witness of the great struggle which was constantly going on there between the Australian Colonies and the Crown when the English Government refused them control over their own financial affairs, and also refused to give them responsible government. By responsible government we all know what is meant. I saw some years of that controversy, and I also saw the victory that was gained by the Colonies. And at the end of that struggle I was myself one of the elected Members in the Legislature of the Colony of Victoria, and a Member of the first responsible Cabinet. I can say, without exaggeration, that from the time those powers were given to the Colony all the old feelings of distrust towards the Mother Country, and of hostility to her action which had sprung up in later years, and had led to considerable mischief, passed away. And at the present time the 3,000,000 of people in the Australian Colonies are probably as loyal and contented subjects of the Queen as are to be found in her Dominions. This, Sir, is due to the concession of responsible government, and entire control over their own affairs, which was so stoutly resisted by the Government of this country, 40 years ago, and the difficulty has been ended by the establishment of most satisfactory relations between us and these Colonies. Similar results have been seen on a much larger scale in Canada. In moving the second reading of the Bill my right hon. Friend briefly and clearly showed what was the result of the controversy between Canada and this country 50 years ago, and of our yielding. All that we yielded was the establishment of a good and responsible Government. At the time I speak of—52 years ago—there was a limited representation of the people in the Legislative Body in Canada, but there was no Representative Government. The Executive was nominated from this country. All that the Local Legislatures could do was to refuse or to qualify some of the Appropriations proposed by the Government. Their functions were limited to a qualified financial power, and even that financial power, more than once, was taken away from them. What was the result? Then came the two rebellions—one on the part of those of British and Irish descent, and the other on the part of those who were of French extraction. It gave this country great trouble to put down those two rebellions, and Canadian affairs occupied a very painful and important part in the proceedings of Parliament and the acts of the Government. Many persons of great authority in this House at that time said it would be better and wiser to adopt a policy of concession, and to give the Canadians the management of their own local affairs under the authority of the Crown. But the majority of this House was not of that opinion, and proposals of the kind at first received only scanty support from Parliament. I will read to the House a passage from a speech made in this House on the question of self-government in Canada in 1838 by a very distinguished Member of the House, who, since that date, was either two or three times Prime Minister—I mean the late Earl of Derby. I think that some of the expressions in that speech will appear very familiar to hon. Gentlemen opposite, even if they may not have studied Canadian affairs. In the debate on Lord Durham's plan of self-government for Canada, the Earl of Derby said of the Canadians—

> "They were a people of ignorance the most profound, of prejudice the most moderate, of

> simplicity the most undoubted, of vanity the most egregious, a people in the most absolute and entire dependence upon those demagogues and leaders who flattered their prejudices for the purpose of obtaining their support. If it were desirable to retain the Colony, this project, which would at once render nugatory on our part all control over them and plunge us into difficulties which could only be escaped from by violence, must not be entertained for a moment. What would be the consequence? The establishment of a Republic. The concession would remove the only check to the power of the dominant majority—a majority in numbers only; for in wealth, in education, in enterprize, it was greatly inferior to the minority, who were settlers of British descent."

Now, Sir, what was the course taken on the advice of that far-seeing statesman, Lord Durham? He went out to Canada, and he advised Her Majesty's Government to settle the question. There is one sentence of Lord Durham's which I will quote to the House. He proposed that—

> "The Colonies themselves should be allowed to execute as well as to make the laws."

Now, for this Lord Durham was called a great many hard names—almost as many as have been applied to my right hon. Friend. His policy was called a seditious and shameful policy; and that is only a sample of the attacks which were made upon him. But his policy was carried out; wiser counsels than those represented in the speech from which I have read an extract were adopted, and some persons, who at that time denounced Lord Durham and his proposals, within 20 years discovered that the Canadian Constitution was one that was thoroughly fit for a people of British origin, even with a large admixture of Frenchmen; and no one even of those sitting opposite fails now to appeal to the Administration of Canada as a good and sound and Constitutional Administration. So I venture to believe will be the case with regard to Ireland. If I have troubled the House too long with these references to another country, it is because I feel that human nature—British human nature and Irish human nature—is the same, whether on this side of the Atlantic or on the other. I cannot but feel confident that, as all those fears which were prevalent at that time and for some years on the part of the majority of the House of Commons were dissipated by experience when Lord Durham's proposals were thoroughly carried out, so these fears with regard to Ireland will be dissipated by experience. I have spoken upon this question, I hope, without heat and without introducing any matters of personal controversy—although I confess that from the tone of the debate I have been tempted to refer to some such matters; I have not done so, and I have tried to keep the House strictly to arguments derived from facts and from analogies, hoping that, for once, such a line of argument will be acceptable to the House, even without the introduction of any personalities. I will conclude with the words used by Mr. Burke on this subject, in his famous letter to Lord Charlemont, which will be known to hon. Members below the Gangway opposite, even if it is not known generally to English and Scotch Members. Mr. Burke used these words—

> "Mutual affection will do more for mutual help and mutual advantage between the two Kingdoms than any ties of artificial connection whatever. No reluctant tie can be a strong one."

At the present time the tie which exists between Great Britain and Ireland is not only a reluctant tie, but one which I believe is deeply disliked—I might almost say hated—by a large portion of the Irish people; and, in my humble judgment, the new bond of amity and equal interest which this Bill proposes will be accepted with cordiality, and will, I believe, result in a permanent attachment to, and affection for, this country.

MAJOR SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): I do not propose to follow the right hon. Gentleman into the interesting historical sketch we have had from him; but I cannot help saying that the ultimate fate of this Bill will not be decided by what Mr. Pitt said or did, or by what Sir Ralph Abercromby said or did, but that it will be decided by the facts of the case as they exist in 1886. The right hon. Gentleman has informed us that the Army in Ireland was in a bad state before the Union; but that does not seem to me to be a particularly strong argument for repealing the Union.

MR. CHILDERS: I said it was a good argument not for repealing the Union, but for maintaining the Army under British authority.

MAJOR SAUNDERSON: That is exactly the point on which we differ. We believe that you are repealing the

Union. The right hon. Gentleman also gave the House information as to his experience in the case of a Colony; but that Colony is a very long way off. Besides that, there is this material difference between the case of that Colony or of Canada and of Ireland, that the Colonies have never paid tribute, as far as I understand, to Great Britain, and, therefore, never acquired direct representation in this House. Anyone who has sat long in this House will realize as intensely as I do, from the condition of the House and the nature of the debates we have lately heard, that the House has almost had enough of this business. Nearly every argument which can be offered to the House on either side of the question has, I believe, been already offered to the consideration of the House; and therefore I will, if I can, avoid trespassing much upon those topics which have been so maturely discussed, but will confine my remarks to the practical point of view in which the Party to which I belong regard this Bill. After all, I can speak with more authority on their behalf than I could in a more general way. Some years have now elapsed since the Separatist Question assumed definition and a complete shape and form under the auspices of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell). Before the advent of that hon. Gentleman to the position of Leader of the Separatist Party the Home Rule Party was without form, and void. Practically it had no real meaning; but since the advent of the hon. Member for the City of Cork he and his supporters have undoubtedly given it a definite shape. We fully understand what they mean. They have never disguised their intentions; they have never hidden their object; and, although I am bitterly opposed to their opinions, I have always given the hon. Member credit for having been entirely honest and straightforward in defining what his objects are and what was the goal at which he aimed. Therefore, I can understand exactly what it is he wants. In bygone days I have often wondered what arguments the hon. Member intended to adduce in this House in order to persuade it to accede to his demand for a separation between the two countries, because the hon. Member has repeatedly stated that separation is the goal at which he aims. I do not think the hon. Member has ever denied that; he has distinctly stated it. ["No!"] The word "separation" may be objectionable to hon. Gentleman below the Gangway; but the House will understand what is the meaning of the phrase—"Ireland a nation among the nations of the world, free from outside control." I have no wish to argue the meaning of the word "separation;" but the meaning conveyed in that passage is certainly, from an English point of view, separation. The hon. Member for the City of Cork, who is a very astute politician, if he will allow me to say so, thought better of trying to persuade the House by any arguments of his own, and he has, therefore, employed the most able advocate that could be found in the length and breadth of Great Britain. The hon. Member discovered that advocate in the person of the Prime Minister. Well, Sir, undoubtedly we, the Irish Loyalists — [*Laughter*] — well, I will alter the word, in deference to the feelings of hon. Members below the Gangway, and I will say that we, the Irish Unionists, from the very first looked upon this Bill with suspicion and abhorrence. We have been accused of treating it unfairly; but I think it can be easily shown that we have every right to look on this Bill with suspicion and abhorrence. First and foremost we believe that the Liberal Party, under present conditions, is not to be trusted. ["Oh!"] Hon. Members below the Gangway do not appear to like that observation. I would not have ventured to make such an assertion if I were not backed up by a very high authority. There are certain conditions under which even the Liberal Party, which is supposed to be a truly patriotic and honest Party, is not to be trusted. What are those conditions? That the Liberal Party should find itself in such a position that the hon. Member for the City of Cork and his supporters could transfer it from that side of the House to this whenever they please. In order to back up my opinion I will quote the authority on which I make that statement—a statement I should never have dreamt of making in this House of my own accord seriously. These are the words on which I make this statement—and the House will see that, at any rate, I have good reason for making it—it will be seen that we, Unionists, have grounds for looking with great suspicion on a Bill proposed under the conditions named by this high authority—

> "Let me now suppose, for argument's sake I may suppose it possible, that the Liberal Party might be returned to the coming Parliament—that is rather a staggering supposition, but I beg you to indulge me for an instant—might be returned to the coming Parliament in a minority, but in a minority which might become a majority by the aid of the Irish vote; and I will suppose that owing to some cause the present—that is the Conservative—Government has disappeared, and that the Liberal Party was called upon to deal with this great Constitutional question of the Government of Ireland in a position where it was a minority dependent upon the Irish vote for converting it into a majority. Now, gentlemen, I tell you seriously and solemnly that although I believe the Liberal Party to be honourable, patriotic, sound, and trustworthy, yet in such a position as that it would not be safe for them to enter upon the consideration of a measure in respect to which, at the first step of its progress, it would be in the power of a Party coming from Ireland to say—'Unless you do this, and unless you do that, we will turn you out to-morrow.'"

That is exactly the position in which the right hon. Gentleman is now standing. [Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: No.] The right hon. Gentleman says "No." I admit that there is this difference—that the Liberal Party in this House is in a majority as compared with the Conservative Party, but the Government is exactly in the position mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman—namely, that the hon. Member for the City of Cork can say to the right hon. Gentleman—"Unless you do this, or unless you do that, out you go to-morrow." As I believe that the right hon. Gentleman had the exact gauge of the morality of the Liberal Party in his mind at the time, and as I should imagine that the right hon. Gentleman was speaking for himself, it must be taken that the right hon. Gentleman fully understood the terrible temptation it would be if he and his Government were placed in such a position that the hon. Member for the City of Cork might say to them—"Unless you do this, or unless you do that, out you go to-morrow." The right hon. Gentleman must have felt in his innermost conscience that if he were ever placed in that position he could not be trusted to carry out such a measure as this. Irishmen from the North, therefore, look with intense suspicion upon a measure brought forward by a Government exactly in the critical and delicate situation indicated by the right hon. Gentleman in that speech. But, besides that, we have other reasons which induce hon. Members from the North of Ireland to look with grave suspicion upon this measure. In the first place, it has been accompanied by a series of reciprocal conversions. Of course, we can all understand the conversion of any single hon. Member who might suddenly change his views. I admit it frankly; but we find it extremely difficult, however, to realize the fact of the sudden conversion on this subject of the whole Treasury Bench, and of such a large number of hon. Members below the Gangway. It is rather extraordinary that these conversions should synchronize and that they should take place at the same moment. Perhaps the House will permit me to refer to one or two wonderful changes of opinion that have taken place among right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench, and among many hon. Members below the Gangway. In the immediate past, several of the most distinguished occupants of the Treasury Bench undoubtedly entertained views which were diametrically opposed to those which they hold at present. I have no desire to rake up the antecedents of the right hon. Gentlemen, and I should not do so on this occasion were it not for the fact that it materially affects the point of view from which we regard this measure. For instance, I will take, in the first place, one of the most distinguished occupants of the Treasury Bench—a right hon. Gentleman who is supposed to be one of the most distinguished Whig statesmen in this country. I refer to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman will probably make a speech during the course of this debate, and then he will have an opportunity of informing the House how it was that so remarkable a conversion has been brought about in his own case. What did the right hon. Gentleman say? I do not intend to go back upon ancient history in the few remarks I propose to make; and, indeed, the only great statesman of the last century to whose words I shall refer will be one who will meet with the entire approval of the right hon. Gentleman—namely, Mr. Burke. I wish, however, to refer to living personages who live and breathe and have their being in the House of Commons at the present moment. This is a speech delivered no longer ago than last autumn, and that can scarcely be called ancient history. At the time the right hon. Gentleman delivered it he was in an unconverted state. This is what the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "I read only the other day a speech made in Ireland by an hon. Member, in which he said that he deprecated outrages. I am very glad that Mr. Parnell and others have, for the first time, deprecated outrages. But there has been a still more serious question than 'Boycotting' raised in Ireland, because since the declaration of Mr. Parnell there can be no doubt what is the policy which he and his Party have adopted. It is a policy of absolute separation between the two countries. How has that declaration been met? Two speakers most eminently entitled to represent the Liberal Party—Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain—have spoken on this question, and they have spoken in a manner worthy of their position and worthy of the Party they represent."

A very strange conversion certainly has taken place in the right hon. Gentleman, for he does not appear now to sympathize entirely with either the noble Marquess or the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. Let me take another case of conversion which appears to have taken place at the same time, and, apparently, with the same object—the conversion of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War. I listened with great attention to his speech the other night, and, for a man who spoke against his convictions, I thought it was a very good speech. I do not mean that phrase at all offensively. The right hon. Gentleman always gives me the idea of being a brave and robust Scotchman—a man not likely to change his opinions suddenly. Yet we find that not very long ago the right hon. Gentleman held opinions diametrically opposed to those which he expressed the other evening. This speech was delivered not very long ago; it is still later than the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. On October 16, 1885, at which period the right hon. Gentleman was in an unconverted state, he said, speaking about the condition of Ireland—

> "Would Lord Salisbury make light of intimidation if he held a small farm from which he drew his whole income, and if, in consequence of some act of his against a certain political organization, he were to find his labourers leaving his employment against their will, his servants quitting his house, his shopkeepers refusing to supply him with food and clothing, the markets closed against him, his children refused admission to school, and his family denied any attention or comfort in sickness, or when, perhaps, in the arms of death? He spoke by the book of things that he knew."

Those were the words of the right hon. Gentleman when describing the condition of Ireland, and speaking of the organization of which the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) is the head; and yet, in the speech which he made in this House the other evening, the right hon. Gentleman informed us that the very organization which he justly condemned in these scathing terms was an organization to which the British Parliament and the British people were unconditionally to surrender. But we have learned something more about the right hon. Gentleman's conversion. We have learned a remarkable and interesting fact about the right hon. Gentleman from a speech delivered at Sheffield by the President of the Board of Trade. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Mundella) not long ago visited his constituents, and delivered a speech, in which he described the process through which the Secretary of State for War had passed. This is what he said—

> "I consulted also Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, and when I told him the conclusions I had come to, he said—'Ah, you have discovered it also, have you? I found salvation long ago.'"

This gave me the idea—I do not know how far it will convince the House—of a swimmer sinking in deep water, but at last, getting his feet on a mud bank, lifting himself to the surface and shaking himself clear of all his former convictions. The conversions of hon. Members below the Gangway have been equally remarkable. The hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. W. O'Brien), in the very moderate and eloquent speech which he delivered the other night—a speech so entirely different from others which we have heard him deliver—deprecated the making of quotations from speeches delivered in past times. I do not wonder that the hon. Member does deprecate such quotations.

Mr. W. O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.): I did not deprecate them. I simply said that the hon. and gallant Member and his followers might spare themselves the trouble of making these quotations, because I admitted in the frankest manner all that they could prove.

Major SAUNDERSON: I quite understand the position of the hon. Member. I must, however, explain why I feel bound, when I speak in this House on this question, to make quotations from speeches delivered by hon. Members below the Gangway. We often in the streets pass by a man whose character we are aware is not of the best description. I do not apply that to the hon. Gentleman. We never feel it necessary—indeed, it would be an odious occupation—to rake up the misdeeds of particular men unless they propose to acquire an influence over our affairs. Otherwise, we should leave them alone; and if the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. W. O'Brien) and his Friends would be content to remain Members of this House, and to debate and deal with Irish questions—as I believe it is our honour and privilege to do now—I should be the last man to get up here and rake up what they have said and done in former times. But it is a very different thing when it is proposed by the right hon. Gentleman opposite to place the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) and his Friends over me and my Friends, giving them the power of making our laws and guiding our destinies. In such a case it behoves us, if we have any remnant of common sense left at all, to ask what right they have established by their words and deeds in the past to a position of trust in the future. We do not object to see a horse in the street with capped hocks so long as we have not to buy it ourselves; but, if we desire to purchase the animal, we are justified in inquiring whether these capped hocks are due to the fact that the animal has kicked in former times. Now, Sir, there are several quotations which I feel it necessary to read to the House—interesting speeches delivered several years ago. I do not intend to go further back into ancient history than last year; but I wish to show that strange conversions have taken place below the Gangway in the opinions which hon. Gentlemen who sit there now hold. The hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. W. O'Brien) wound up his speech the other night with some very complimentary remarks about the Prime Minister, and lest the right hon. Gentleman should feel over vain, I will read to the House an interesting paragraph which I conclude was written by the hon. Member himself, because it is taken from a leading article in his own paper. The hon. Member can deny the authorship of it if he likes. It is most interesting, and is written in graphic English—

> "This hog-wash about Liberal philanthropy to Ireland had better be dropped if ever we are to come to business, and see how much the Liberal Party are prepared to offer and how much they require in return. The spectacle of the hoary British Pharisee; sleekly congratulating himself upon his goodness in coercing, plundering, and depopulating Ireland, is sickening enough in the dense average Briton, but is really a little too bad in a perfectly wide-awake statesman who has just been turned out of Office with a Crimes Act in his pocket."

Now, Sir, I venture to point out that some sudden change of mind must have taken place so far as the hon. Member for South Tyrone is concerned between that date and last December, for he certainly at that time did not speak of the right hon. Gentleman in the same flattering terms. How the subsequent conversion of the hon. Member came about we cannot say. And the right hon. Gentleman himself, if we may judge from his speeches, was also in an unconverted state at the time of the last Election, because he appealed to the constituencies to give him a majority sufficient to enable him to deal with hon. Members below the Gangway. Perhaps we may never learn how that reciprocal action took place between the Treasury Bench and hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway; but, at any rate, whatever happened, there occurred an injudicious mixture of the innocent principles of hon. Members below the Gangway and the old traditions of the Liberal Party, which the right hon. Gentleman is supposed to represent. Our wonder is that we should have presented to us that lame and limping British policy which goes with one leg from the Liberal Party on the one side and another from Cork on the other. What has been the first result of this ill-omened policy? It has been the disruption of the Liberal Party. The very first thing that occurred was that a seccession happened of the great majority of Liberals on the other side of the House. ["No!"] Hon. Members below the Gangway say "No!" I hope they are right. Perhaps they are right, because the Party of Secession is led by the Prime Minister. We have heard a great many speeches;

but, as far as I am aware, we have had no instance of any Liberal or Whig politician who has expressed himself in favour of the policy now proposed by the Prime Minister. It is a new policy, and it is just as much opposed to the real policy of the Liberal Party as to that of hon. Members who sit on this side of the House. In bringing in the Bill the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister had two things to say. He admitted that it was an expensive Bill. [Mr. Gladstone dissented.] Of course, that is not the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman. It involves two items of expense. The right hon. Gentleman calls it an economical measure, because he does not set much store on one of these items. To his mind it is only of trifling value; but to my mind it is the greatest item—namely, the unity of the British Empire. That is the first and the greatest item of expense. The second item of expense is the £50,000,000. These two items are inseparably bound together. That is an established fact; and if the first is carried by a great majority, the second will be carried by a still greater majority. In opposing the Bill we feel that it is our duty to show that there is a less expensive and more satisfactory way of accomplishing the objects the Prime Minister has in view. The principal argument of the right hon. Gentleman was that 85 Members have been returned from Ireland representing the policy of separation. Has the right hon. Gentleman read the statistics of the elections which have taken place in Ireland? There were 738,058 electors in Ireland, of whom only 307,596 voted for the policy of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell), while 430,462 did not vote for the policy, so that there was a majority of about 113,000 electors who did not vote for the policy of separation represented by the hon. Member for the City of Cork. It should also be remembered that the 307,596 voted under the compulsion of the most powerful coercive organization that ever existed. And, because they so voted, the House of Commons is now asked to agree to the disruption of the Empire. [An hon. Member: What about the uncontested elections?] I venture to say that that is an argument which will not prevail in this House. The argument put forward by the right hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) was that, up to the present moment, crime and outrage have been the means by which Irishmen have ever extorted concessions from England; and, therefore, says the right hon. Gentleman, this Bill should be conceded before the Irish begin their congenial methods of arguing the matter. ["Oh!"] I am only using the expression of the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): He said nothing of the kind.

Major SAUNDERSON: That argument cuts both ways. How do we know, if this Bill is passed, that this method of argument will not be resorted to in the future to secure the ultimate object hon. Members below the Gangway have in view—the separation of the two countries? How do we know that that method will not be resorted to which the right hon. Gentleman says has, up to the present moment, always been successful? The principal point in the speech of the Chief Secretary was that if this Bill is not passed something terrible will happen—we must look out for squalls. It is true that we may have outrages and dynamite explosions; but the English nation is different from what it has been in former years if it has not pluck enough left to deal with arguments like that. The right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) made a speech in favour of the Bill. I will not attempt to follow the right hon. Gentleman through that speech, which certainly appeared to me to be a rhetorical Sahara without an oasis. He tried to show that potatoes and turnips sympathize with the views of the hon. Member for the City of Cork, and that they have decreased both in size and volume since the Union. But, in the end, his great argument was that we have to deal with America. That is the argument put before the British House of Commons, I presume, as a menace. But we know how to deal with the Irish-Americans. I want to know, however, if it is quite certain that the Bill, as it stands, will satisfy the Irish Americans as the right hon. Gentleman assumes? [An hon. Member: It will.] That is a matter which I venture to doubt, and which I venture to contest. I read in *The Irish World*—a newspaper of which hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway have heard—this passage—

> "When Hicks-Beach asked whether the Irish Members of Parliament would be content with Mr. Gladstone's proposals as a final settlement, Mr. O'Brien responded, 'Every one of them.' This reply may have been fitting in a heated debate; but in sober earnest, and after cool reflection, I do not think it would be repeated."

That is the opinion of *The Irish World*, which is cognizant of Irish feeling. [MR. W. O'BRIEN: Yes; of the dynamiters.] This paper is decidedly of opinion that the Irish people would not be satisfied with the concessions of the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): Will the hon. Gentleman say whether the extract he has read is the opinion of *The Irish World*, or an extract from a letter?

MAJOR SAUNDERSON: I have quoted it from a leading article which appeared in *The Irish World.* I should not quote these things were it not for the fact, as I have already observed, that this Bill proposes to place hon. Members below the Gangway in a responsible position in Ireland. I want the House to remember what these hon. Members have said in the immediate past before they were converted. Let me take the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. W. O'Brien). If the Bill passes he will probably be in a leading position in the new Government of Ireland. I think that is a very natural thing. He is one of the most able and most eloquent Members below the Gangway. He says he will give me any pledges we please; but I do not value his pledges. What did the hon. Member say when the Prince of Wales was in Ireland last summer? The hon. Member made a speech, in which he said—

> "There is no loyalty in Ireland to England or an English Prince, and wherever the Prince would go throughout the country there would not be wanting evidence to remind him that the sincere and earnest prayer of the Irish people was that the British Empire would be sunk for 24 hours to the bottom of the sea."

Yet the right hon. Gentleman proposes to place the hon. Member for South Tyrone in a position of responsibility in the Irish Government. I do not wish to make any more quotations. ["Go on!"] Very well, then, I will give one more. This is a very interesting quotation—a speech from *The Freeman's Journal*—and, therefore, I presume it is correct—

> "If the olive branch that we are holding out to England now should meet with no better response than the raving of the Cockney newspapers—
>
> 'We've a hand for the grasp of friendship,
>   And another to make them quake,
> And they are welcome to whichsoever
>   It pleases them most to take.'
>
> If they do not want peace Mr. Parnell will give them war. He will give them such a war as 80 Members can carry on in the heart of the English Parliament, and such war as the Irish people are able to carry on outside with the weapon of the franchise and the weapon of the 'Boycotting' pike, as they call it, or any other weapons that time and opportunity may offer us or those who come after us from generation to generation."

[*Cheers from the Irish Members.*] Now, Sir, those are the opinions of the hon. Member for South Tyrone, and opinions which are now cheered from below the Gangway. As far as I can understand, and can interpret those cheers, they mean that if the House of Commons is willing to grant their demands, formulated as they are by the Bill, they will not proceed to these desperate remedies, and will abandon the "Boycotting" pike. Now, I do not think that the House of Commons, unless it has lost all its pluck and determination, will allow itself for one moment to be intimidated by arguments such as that. This question ought to be dealt with on its merits. Is it likely to succeed? That is the question which the House of Commons ought to ask themselves. Is it likely to be a final settlement, or a successful settlement; and is the House of Commons asked by this Bill to pay too dearly for the operation? I believe, Sir, that it will not be a final settlement. Before now, I have challenged hon. Members below the Gangway to get up in the House of Commons and inform the House and the country that they have foresworn and abandoned all the objects which in past years they informed us was the goal and object of their lives. The hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) has never informed us that he has abandoned, permanently, the idea of Ireland becoming over and over again a separate nation, which he has stated was the object at which he aimed. ["Never!"] Surely hon. Members below the Gangway will not get up in this House and state that they have abandoned the intention of making Ireland an entirely independent country free from outside control. [An hon. MEMBER: We never entertained it.] I have challenged them to do so, but they have not done it. Why is this? It is because they have not abandoned that intention.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): Why did you recant your Liberal opinions?

MAJOR SAUNDERSON: In these circumstances I think we come to a fair conclusion when we say that this Bill would simply be made use of as a lever to work out the final ends and aims of hon. Members below the Gangway. It cannot be a final settlement, for this reason—that the Irish people are not united in making the demand. ["Oh!"] Surely hon. Members below the Gangway will not assert that the Irish Protestant population are in favour of this measure? ["Yes; large numbers of them."] I venture to say that the House of Commons is not yet quite so lost to all sense of what is right and true as to believe the assertion that the Irish Protestants are in favour of this measure, even although the statement should be made in this House by an Abraham backed up by the Lamentations of Jeremiah. It will not be a final settlement of the question, because the strongest part of the Irish population are opposed to it. ["No!"] I do not hope to conciliate the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister, because he has thrown overboard all classes, including the education and property of the country; and he believes that all patriotism dwells outside that category. But the property, the commerce, and the education of the country have distinctly declared themselves to be opposed to this measure. ["No, no!"] I think the very fact of the constitution of the 86 Members who sit below the Gangway proves what I say. Where among them are to be found the bankers, the merchants, and the landlords of the country? I am not saying this in any invidious way, but I am simply relating a fact which cannot be denied. There are, I believe, a few landlords among hon. Members below the Gangway; but the exception proves the rule. I believe that the hon. Member for South Dublin (Sir Thomas Esmonde) is a landlord; but that was held to be the very reason why he should not be elected until he proved to demonstration that a relation of his had been hung in 1798. Now, I think I must inform the House as to what I believe the alternative policy should be. There was an interesting work, published a good many years ago, entitled *Rejected Addresses.* It would be an interesting thing to publish, after this debate is over, the rejected alternative schemes, headed by the measure now proposed by the Prime Minister. My alternative scheme is a very simple and clear one. The great argument brought forward by the Prime Minister and those who support him is to this effect—that everything has been tried and everything has failed. Well, Sir, when a physician has prescribed remedies for a sick man, and when he finds that those remedies have not succeeded in curing the patient, he ought to find out first of all, before he changes the remedies, or before he gives up the patient, whether the sick man has taken the remedies. If the physician discovers that the sick man for whom he has prescribed has never taken any of the remedies, but that the attendants have thrown them out of the window, the physician would then be justified in saying—"You must get rid of the attendants, and let them follow the medicine." Now, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman has said that all the remedies applied to Ireland have failed. Why have they failed? When I challenged the right. hon. Gentleman some time ago to whitewash the character of his future Irish Prime Minister, the right hon. Gentleman paid no attention to my invitation. I observe, however, that Earl Spencer went down to Newcastle and attempted that process. He also went to Leeds, where the operation was repeated; but I venture to say that, instead of the noble Earl improving the case, like an inexperienced rubber-out he has made the smudge still worse. What did Earl Spencer say with regard to the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell)? He said at Newcastle that one of the objections urged against the hon. Member becoming a Minister for Ireland; was that some men had connected him with crime in Ireland; but of that he entirely absolved the hon. Member. Now, Sir, I want to know who it was that accused the hon. Member of having been connected with crime in Ireland? It was the Prime Minister himself. The right hon. Gentleman accused the hon. Member of being the head of an organization whose steps were dogged by crime, and he accused him also of leading men on a pilgrimage of plunder and spoliation. Why did not Earl Spencer at the time go and tell the right hon. Gentleman that the hon. Member was entirely guiltless? Why did he allow the Prime Minister to remain under the impression that the hon. Member was guilty of the crimes of which he was accused? Earl Spencer then went on to explain how it was that Ireland had not yet been pacified by the efforts made by successive Liberal Administrations. Listen to this, which I think is very interesting. He said—

> "They (the Liberal Government) have passed drastic measures to relieve the grievances of the tenants. They have lowered the rents and deprived the landlords of a great part of their profits. They have done much to remove the difficulties of the Irish Question; but that question was never settled. It was never allowed to be settled by the Irish National League Party, and it will never be allowed to be settled by the National League Party until they have a Home Rule Government in Ireland."

At Newcastle he said much the same thing. He said—

> "Some of the measures were so strong"—

these were the measures passed by the Liberal Party to try and coerce Ireland—

> "that we had to strain the loyalty of many English Members to carry those measures, and yet those measures were hardly allowed to take effect in Ireland by the National Party in order to get the government into their own hands—the self-government of their land—they would not allow those remedial measures to take effect; they would not allow them then, and they will not allow them hereafter."

And so, because an organization led by the hon. Member for the City of Cork would not allow those great remedial measures to be accepted by the Irish people, because the hon. Member has prevented the Irish people from reaping the benefit of those measures, we are to disintegrate and dismember the British Empire. Is it possible that the House of Commons will consent to a proposal so monstrous and so devoid of common sense as that? First of all, let us get rid of the National League. That is supposed to be an impossibility. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite have simply thrown up the sponge. They say they are incapable of coping with that organization, which prevents the Irish people from obtaining the advantage of the great Acts which have been passed for their benefit. Then why, before making this desperate experiment and proceeding to cut off one of the limbs of England, should we not try and see what would take place in Ireland if we restore the authority of the law, and crush the coercive authority of this nefarious organization, which has destroyed the life and the liberty of our native country? Is it impossible to do so? I venture to say—and hon. Members below the Gangway know perfectly well—that if the Government would put its foot down—if the right hon. Gentleman would himself put his foot down—which he never has done without allowing a little streak of daylight to be seen beneath it—if he would put his foot firmly down, not only would he be backed up by the Protestants and Orangemen of Ulster, but by those very farmers and tenants whose condition has been and will be so much improved by the Land Laws which the right hon. Gentleman himself has passed. A remarkable speech was made at Monaghan on October 10, 1885, by a distinguished Member below the Gangway on this very subject; and it is important to notice that hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway know very well that one of their great difficulties is to prevent the tenant farmers of Ireland from asserting their right to enjoy the benefits of the legislation which has been passed for them. The hon. Member to whom I refer said in that speech that there were two points that should be seen to—two chinks in their armour; and the first was a combination that would make it impossible for the rich farmer to break up that organization—that is, the National League. What does "seeing to" a man in Ireland mean? It means preventing him from paying his rent. ["No!"] In the part of Ireland, at least, that is under the dominion of the National League, it is a thing that is thoroughly understood. The Southern and Western farmers are to be "seen to," in order that they may not break up the National League—there will be no more necessity for "seeing to" the farmers in the South or West of Ireland. Our alternative policy, then, is to crush the National League. If you are not men enough to deal with the National League the days of England will not be many. But you must do something more. You must deal generously with Ireland; you must help—and that, I believe, will be the ultimate salvation of Ireland—you must help the Irish farmers to become the owners of the land they till. That is the policy which I have maintained for years. I believe that if you spend that £50,000,000 in helping the farmers of Ireland to own the land they till, you will raise up a wall and barrier which that miserable organization cannot overthrow. Now, Sir, there is one more point I wish to touch upon before I sit down. The attitude which the Northern Protestants now occupy with respect to this Bill has been animadverted upon very freely in this House and in the country. We are called half rebels and disloyal men because we have asserted publicly, as I now assert before the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell), that as long as we have the power we shall use that power to prevent the hon. Member and his Friends from ruling Ireland. I admit that the House can pass any Bill it pleases. But even if the House has got that power, there are certain things it has no right to do. Allow me to put a case which exactly illustrates what I mean. Let me suppose—which, of course, is very hard to suppose—that Russia succeeded, by corruptly subsidizing a certain number of Members of this House, in getting a Bill passed, and the Bill was passed by a majority of the men so bribed, should we not be justified in employing all the power we possess in contending against and in fighting against such a measure? Well, Sir, what is the case at present? There are 85 Members of this House paid by America.

Mr. W. O'BRIEN (Tyrone, S.): It is false. Recall that statement.

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): You know well that it is false.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. W. O'Brien) not to interrupt the hon. and gallant Gentleman. If the hon. Member, or any other hon. Member, continues this interruption it will be my duty to take serious notice of it.

Mr. W. O'BRIEN: As a matter of Order, Sir, I will ask whether the hon. and gallant Member is justified in stating here what he knows to be a falsehood? [*Cries of* "Order!" *and* "Name!"]

Mr. SPEAKER: The expression which the hon. Member has just used is quite un-Parliamentary. On the other hand, I am quite sure that if the hon. and gallant Gentleman intended to impute any unfair motive to any hon. Member of this House he will at once withdraw the imputation.

Mr. W. O'BRIEN: That is all we ask him to do.

Major SAUNDERSON: I did not mean to imply anything derogatory to hon. Members.

Mr. W. O'BRIEN: Withdraw the expression.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I rise to a point of Order. I saw the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. W. O'Brien) get up in his place and accuse the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Major Saunderson) of stating what he knows to be a falsehood. I ask you, Sir, whether an expression of that kind can be allowed to pass without its being fully withdrawn?

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already told the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. W. O'Brien) that the expression he has used is un-Parliamentary, and must be withdrawn. On the other hand, I must say that the imputations contained in the remarks of the hon. and gallant Member are very irritating. I must call upon the hon. and gallant Member now in possession of the House, and also upon the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. W. O'Brien), to withdraw the expressions they have used.

Major SAUNDERSON: I withdraw, with pleasure, any expression I may have used which is contrary to the Rules of this House.

Mr. W. O'BRIEN: Then, Sir, so do I.

Major SAUNDERSON: I hope some hon. Gentleman from below the Gangway will rise in his place and inform the House whether the Fund called the Parliamentary Fund is not derived principally from America? The accounts of that Fund are published periodically by *The Freeman's Journal*, and a sum of £12,000 was mentioned, at a very recent date, as having been received from America. I do not, therefore, think that any hon. Member belonging to the National Party will be able to get up and say that they derive no money from America—money which is contributed for the purpose—perhaps a very laudable purpose—of enlisting the services of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway. If they tell me that no money has been received from America for that purpose, of course I shall only be too happy to withdraw any expression I may have used; but I do not believe that any hon. Member will get up in his place and say that the Nationalists derive no money from America.

Mr. W. O'BRIEN: I say so most distinctly.

Major SAUNDERSON: The difficulty is this—that we have below the Gangway 85 Members who have distinctly stated over and over again that their object is to dismember the Empire, and bring about a separation between England and Ireland. ["No!"]

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I rise to Order. I ask you, Sir, whether the hon. and gallant Gentleman is entitled to accuse the Irish Members of desiring to bring about a separation between England and Ireland?

Major SAUNDERSON: I will again withdraw the expression which I used. Hon. Members, it appears, do not like the word "separation;" and I will, therefore, say that their object is to place Ireland in such a position that she will be free from any control or interference on the part of England. I call that separation. Hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway do not call it separation. If this Bill is carried, it will be carried by a majority which will be formed from below the Gangway, and a measure carried in that way in this House, which, to my mind, leads to separation between England and Ireland, is a measure to which I, and those who think with me, would never give our adhesion. We do not intend—we are not quite so foolish—to rise, as some hon. Members apparently imagine that we should rise, in arms against the passing of this Bill; but what we say we are prepared to do, and what we intend to do, is this—to absolutely refuse to acknowledge the authority of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) and his Friends, when their Government is formed. I believe, Sir, that that determination will be approved by the great mass of the people of this country. I should like to appeal to the memory of the Prime Minister as to his former experiences with regard to Ireland, and ask whether they ought not to lead him to pursue an entirely different course from that which he is pursuing at the present time? What is statesmanship? Statesmanship, according to my notion, may be roughly described as the science of giving past experience a concrete form in legislative enactments. What is the past experience of the right hon. Gentleman? Irish wrongs took the shape with him of a Upas tree, and with the desire he always manifests to cut down every tree he sees he determined that it should fall. It appeared that the tree had three branches—the Church, the land, and education. The right hon. Gentleman cut off two of the branches; the third he attempted to cut off, but it fell upon himself, and swept him and his Colleagues from the Treasury Bench. He first disestablished the Church to satisfy the demands and to acquire the loyalty of the Roman Catholics. But did he acquire their loyalty? Is the priesthood of Ireland loyal to the Crown of England? The very paper which contained the letter from Archbishop Croke to the Prime Minister also contained a letter from him subscribing to the murderers' fund at Manchester. [Mr. T. M. Healy: No murderers.] The right hon. Gentleman disestablished the Church in Ireland, but he has not satisfied the Catholic clergy; he disestablished the landlords to satisfy the tenants, but has he satisfied them? And now, as the culminating act of his great career, he proposes to dismember the Empire to satisfy rebels. Sir, in conclusion, I can assign 85 reasons why the House of Commons should not consent to this Bill. These are not abstract, but concrete reasons, and they are to be found sitting below the Gangway. I ask hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite whether they would consent to place themselves under the authority of those hon. Members? I venture to say that the most rampant Radical in this House would scorn the notion of being governed by them. Sir, I see two roads which we can take. One of them is the adoption of this Bill, and I believe it to be a sinister path that leads to confusion, to bloodshed, and to the destruction of my country; the other is the path of resolution; it is a difficult one, but I believe it is the path that will lead ultimately to the salvation of the Empire and the happiness of Ireland.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester): Sir, the speech of the hon. and gallant Member who has just sat down (Major Saunderson) illustrates, I think, more than anything else the futility of a policy of exasperation; and I cannot help contrasting the hon. and gallant Member's speech with that delivered by the hon. Member for Longford (Mr. Justin M'Carthy) at the commencement of the evening. That speech was characterized by a union of patriotism and philanthropy, which are too often separated the one from the other. The hon. Member for Longford did not allow the earnestness of his political aspirations to lead him into any uncharitable or unjust aspersions on those who differed from him; on the contrary, the hon. Member held out the olive branch to those who have hitherto opposed this measure, and endeavoured to show how all may work together for the good of his native land. Very different has been the tone of the hon. and gallant Member who has just sat down; but I hope that the advice and counsels of the hon. Member for Longford will yet prevail in the North of Ireland, and that Irishmen will make up their minds to work together for the good of their common country.

There was, however, one point in the speech of the hon. Member for Longford in which, I think, he committed a little injustice to a distinguished Member of this House. Speaking of the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), he said that the speech delivered by the noble Marquess recently in Bradford did not contribute anything to the discussion of the Irish Question. I am not, of course, giving his exact words; but that I believe was the substance of what he said. Sir, I cannot but think that certain words uttered by the noble Marquess towards the close of his speech at Bradford give us the cue to the whole problem before us, and that if that advice were acted upon we should very speedily pass the second reading of the Bill. The noble Marquess, in disavowing any sympathy with the measure proposed by the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government, went on to say in conclusion that, for his part, he was in favour of doing away with every grievance of which the Irish people could complain, and, he added, of extending to Ireland "the liberties which you claim, and which you value for yourselves." This was before an audience of some 3,000 or 4,000 English people, members of a mighty nation, well competent to manage its own affairs, and thinking itself well able to manage the affairs of other people as well. What are the liberties which we value for ourselves? They are that the majority of the inhabitants of this country shall have their way, and that all our affairs, whether Imperial or local, shall be conducted in accordance with the opinions of that majority.

But many hon. Gentlemen say—"That is precisely what we want the Irish people to submit to; they are parts of the United Kingdom politically; and they are bound to submit to the voice of the majority." But, Sir, I think that that argument omits to notice certain essential conditions apart from which the rule of the majority cannot be just or fair. Those conditions are that any group of men amongst whom the rule of the majority is to prevail must have certain interests in common, and interests which are more or less equably diffused throughout the community, out of which the ruling majority is taken. You cannot take any group of persons at haphazard, and say that the rule of the majority will act fairly amongst them. Take, for instance, a small number of capitalists, and a large number of workmen. Would you think it right to combine them together, and to decide the rate of wages by the voice of the majority? The capitalists would think it a very unjust way of deciding it, because they form a little group amongst themselves, and have their own interests. Similarly the workmen have, or believe they have, certain common interests on which a majority of themselves alone ought to decide. But to throw the two groups together and to let the majority in the combination decide would be clearly unjust.

Now, I say that we ought not to act on this principle in politics. Is it not an obvious fact that there are a considerable number of local interests in Ireland which are not shared by the majority of the United Kingdom, and which they ought to be allowed to manage for themselves? If I wanted an illustration as to the manner in which the opinion of the majority in Ireland has been unjustly overruled, I would not go back to the history of the last century, or to the days when Catholics were oppressed; I should be content to appeal to recent legislation, even in the last Parliament, and I should find abundant proof of it. I would refer to the case of the Irish

Church, where the property which ought to have gone to the secular uses of the Irish people was lavished away on the indulgence of that Establishment, and, as it was said, of the disendowed clergy of the Church; and then I would refer to the Irish Land Act, in which case what I should call the rights, or certainly the needs, of hundreds were forgotten, because of the opinions held, not by the majority in Ireland, but in this country. I might refer also to the *fiasco* of the Education Acts in Ireland, which have always broken down, because they were not drawn in accordance with the opinion of the majority in Ireland.

The problem is to make our Empire exhibit an instance of unity in variety, and it is perfectly true in this case that the greater the variety the greater the union. Of course, different conditions are needed for the adaptation of this principle to various parts of the Empire. It is laid down that whatever the feeling may be in various parts of Ireland the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament must be preserved. We have been told over and over again that the Bill before us does away altogether with the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. I should like to know whether or not Parliament is supreme over the Isle of Man? It is a small Island; but the principle involved is the same as on the larger scale of Ireland. The House of Keys, if I understand the matter rightly, is an ancient Institution; but it is strictly subordinate to the Imperial Parliament, although it manages the local business of the Island. The same may be said in principle with regard to the Channel Islands.

I should like to refer to certain remarks made by an authority already referred to by the Prime Minister, and one which I am certain will be received by the eminent legal Members of the House who are present with respect. Speaking of the relations between the Imperial Parliament and the Parliaments of the Colonies, Professor Dicey says that the assertion, although it might seem paradoxical, is, nevertheless, strictly true, that the acknowledged supremacy of the Imperial Parliament is one of the main causes of the wide power of legislation allowed to Colonial Assemblies; that the Constitution of the Colonies depends, directly or indirectly, upon Imperial Statutes; that no lawyer imagines that Parliament could not abolish any Colonial Constitution, or repeal or override any Colonial law whatsoever; that Parliament constantly passes Acts affecting the Colonies; and that the Colonial, no less than the Imperial Courts, admit the principle that an Act of the English Parliament binds in any part of the Dominions to which it is intended to apply. And he says that if an Act of the Victorian Parliament contravenes an Imperial Statute it is for legal purposes void; and if an Act of the Victorian Parliament is considered so opposed to the interests of the Empire that it ought not to be passed, the British Parliament may render it of no effect by means of an Imperial Statute. Thus, a Colonial Parliament, which is apparently almost unlimited in its powers, is limited in everything which affects the security of the Empire by the acknowledged supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. But it is said that, according to the Bill, Parliament altogether resigns the power to control the Irish Parliament, unless it at first sends for the Irish Representatives. Well, Ireland is much nearer to us than any of our Colonies; and our relations with her must continue proportionately intimate. We may alter the laws passed by the Irish Parliament in a way we should never dream of altering the laws of the Colonies; and, therefore, it may be necessary occasionally to send for Irish Members to this House. For these reasons I think that the argument as to the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament ought to be given up.

I should like, before concluding, to say one word as to the state of opinion on which we have to depend for the passage of this Bill. No one can dispute that a marvellous impulse of opinion in the direction of Home Rule has recently been developed in this country. It is said that a great change in popular feeling has been brought about; it is alleged that this is due entirely to the authority of one distinguished man; and it is assumed that if by any evil fate his voice should be silenced, we should hear nothing more of the question. But, Sir, I take that to be an egregious mistake. The right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government is the cause of an outburst of popular opinion in favour of Home Rule for

Ireland at the present time only in the sense that the engineer who lifts the weight from the valve is the cause of an outburst of steam; the pressure was there before, and the right hon. Gentleman himself was the main cause of its being kept down. But now he signifies his opinion that the time has come when Home Rule may be granted to Ireland; and thus it is that the feeling, which has been developing for a long period in the hearts of the people of this country, breaks through. His powers may be great; but even he has not sufficient strength to put a hook in the jaws of the leviathan democracy and to lead it as he will. He has the perspicuity and he has the legislative skill to give definite form to the ideas which have been lying dormant in the minds of the people. He has the inspiring power to concentrate all popular forces on the attainment of a great purpose. These are the powers which he has exercised, and not those dictatorial powers to which it is assumed the democracy are so ready to bow down. The action of the right hon. Gentleman in regard to this measure reminds me of what took place on the occasion of the Disestablishment of the Irish Church. Only two years before the Act of Disestablishment was passed the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister (Mr. Gladstone) told the House and the country that such a measure was altogether outside the range of practical politics; but when two years later he took the weight of his influence off the safety valve of public feeling, the impulse in favour of Disestablishment spread with the rapidity of a fire on the prairie driven by the wind, and he carried his Bill. I maintain that that is the case now, and I know from my own experience, not only in one centre alone, that for years past the democracy have been ashamed, bitterly ashamed, of the relations between this great country and Ireland. They have longed for the time to come when they may extend their hands to their brethren in Ireland, not to wish them a long farewell, but to bid them good luck and God speed in managing their own affairs.

I am not in the least degree desirous of implying that any blame is due to the statesmanship of the Prime Minister, because I know it is not for a man in the right hon. Gentleman's high position to act as any obscure Radical might do. The right hon. Gentleman has exhibited great statesmanship. If he ever utters an opinion in favour of a particular measure, he is expected, and, indeed, he must introduce, a plan upon the subject, and carry it out at once. Therefore, I think he has acted properly in keeping this great measure back until the time came to carry it through; but the democracy have a too long political education to follow blindly in the wake of any Leader, and they are in the habit of looking calmly and dispassionately at the proposals of those Leaders. Of this we had a very remarkable instance in the recent meeting of the Liberal Federation. It would be a mistake to suppose that it has forgotten for a moment the man to whom it owes its birth, nor has the Federation ceased to regard the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. J. Chamberlain) as amongst the supreme statesmen of the future. But when it became a question between the older and more experienced statesman and the younger one they came to the conclusion that the settlement of this great question is to be expected from the Prime Minister rather than from his former distinguished Colleague. It would be a mistake to suppose that any recasting of this measure, or any shuffling of Offices, or any Dissolution of Parliament can make any change in the inevitable condition of the problem which lies before us; and why? Because, however ignorant the people may be supposed to be, they have learnt the duty of doing to others as they would that others should do to them; and, in the present instance, that duty takes the form of demanding fair play for Ireland.

There are those who are convinced of the necessity of carrying Home Rule, but who say with more or less regret that this Bill will not do. I am bound to acknowledge that, when I first saw this Bill, I noticed many points in it which I did not like; but I thought more of the Bill when I had examined into it a little further, and the more I study it the more convinced I am of its being a wonderful piece of legislative statesmanship. Taking the Bill as a whole, I think it an admirable one—in fact, a work of consummate political excellence. There are others, however, who will not consent to go into Committee on this Bill, for fear that they will not be able to effect alterations in it; but, for my part, I wish hon. Members would remember that, on the second reading of a Bill, they are only called upon to affirm the principle.

At the same time, I admit that, when the lives and liberties of millions are concerned, statesmen and Members of Parliament may not unnaturally wish to take the safest course. But are there no dangers on the other side? When I consider the circumstances, I am convinced that no more dreadful blow could be struck against the welfare of both Great Britain and Ireland than would be dealt by the rejection of this measure. The mere introduction of this Bill has already worked a wonderful change in the condition of Ireland. The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom is lauded and praised for his liberal policy even by the men who have at other times bitterly assailed him. The language of violence is changed into the language of moderation, such as we have listened to tonight. Even Earl Spencer, who has been the subject of so many attacks in Ireland, is applauded by his accusers; and the memory of the late Mr. Forster is hailed, as it deserves to be, with respectful honour. Not only do Irish exiles rejoice in the better prospects of their country, but our own Colonists applaud the measure. America, always generous to the best aspects of our national life, pronounces its deed sympathy with us in the measure; and even Germany, Italy, and France, little comparatively as they know of Constitutional order and freedom, see that we are going in the right way to solve this great problem. The whole world gathers round us to welcome the reconciliation between the Sister Islands as a work of good, strong, and generous statesmanship. Shall we disappoint assembled mankind? [*A laugh.*] There are hon. Members who think they can afford to laugh at the sentiments of assembled mankind; yet the very same Gentlemen declared that they were shamed and disgraced when foreign critics sneered at our generous peace with the Boers. I think we ought to be so much in accord with humanity that its blame or encouragement ought to be of some value to us. Whatever may be the risks of this act of statesmanship, I believe that the evils involved in the rejection of the Bill are far more terrible; and though its defects, which I hope may even yet be improved away, were far worse than they are, I would say, in the language of one of old—"Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it."

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Viscount Lymington.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Debate *further adjourned* till *Monday* next.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): Will the Government say what Class of Supply they propose to take on Monday next?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY) (Nottingham, E.): Civil Service.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will the hon. Gentleman be good enough to say what Class will be taken?

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: All Classes.

COTTAGERS' ALLOTMENT GARDENS BILL.—[BILL 186.]

(*Mr. Chaplin, Sir William Hart Dyke, Colonel Harcourt, Viscount Curzon, Mr. Charles Hall.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I beg, Sir, to move the second reading of this Bill, and in doing so I will not delay the House very long in explaining its object. The object of this Bill is to promote and facilitate the acquisition of allotments for cottagers throughout England, where they may not have been in the enjoyment of them hitherto. In other words, it is to give to every agricultural labourer throughout the country an opportunity of acquiring for himself, at a fair and reasonable rent, the use of an allotment of land which shall not be less than half-an-acre in extent. I am perfectly well aware, and I expect that most Members of this House are aware, that a great deal has already been done in regard to providing allotments without any legislative interference whatever. Under the auspices of an Association, of which the Earl of Onslow is the head, the work of providing allotments has been done to a great extent in the past; and I believe it is progressing with even greater rapidity at the present time than heretofore. I am led to believe that the provision of allotments is proceeding with greater rapidity by purely voluntary and private means than it has done for years in the past; but although that is the case, there is still an unsatisfied demand for allotments in the country, and it is with regard to that that I desire to introduce legislation which shall have the effect of hastening and stimulating the good work which, I believe, is now going on to a very considerable extent. It has been objected that if any measure of this sort is necessary, it ought to be in the hands of the Government, and not of a private Member. I am quite prepared to admit that. No doubt it is desirable that it should be in the hands of the Government; but although the Tory Party, and the late Tory Administration, when they sat on that Bench opposite, were dismissed from their position because of their supposed delinquencies in this respect, yet from that time to the present no action has been taken by the present Government in the matter; and it seems to me, therefore, that it is not inopportune that it should be dealt with by a private Member. I am not blaming the Government for themselves, except as far as the introduction of their Irish measure is concerned, for, no doubt, it is impossible for them to deal with this question as well as with their Irish Business; but, under the circumstances, it does not seem to me unreasonable that the task should be undertaken by a private Member. Now, Sir, with the permission of the House, I will endeavour to describe the provisions of this measure. In dealing with this question I have proceeded on the assumption that the instances would be very rare indeed in which the landlord would refuse to give the land for allotment, and that where this unsatisfied demand exists at the present time it arises from the fact that the question has never been brought prominently to the notice of the landlords. It is provided by the Bill that if one-sixth of the cottagers in any parish in England want allotments upon fair and reasonable terms and cannot obtain them, and there is land in the parish available for the purpose, they shall be entitled to make a representation to that effect to the County Authorities. Thereupon, it will become the duty of the County Authorities to make inquiries; and if they find the representations to be borne out by fact, it becomes their duty to communicate with the different landlords, with the view of bringing about the provision of allotments for the people who require them, by agreement and by other voluntary means. There, in 99 cases out of 100, the operation of the Bill will cease, because I cannot conceive upon what grounds landlords can refuse to afford the facilities given in this Bill to the labouring population. Speaking from personal experience on the subject, it appears to me to be distinctly to the interest of the landlord to afford these facilities. They will get as good or, perhaps, better rent for the land than they would if it was let out in one large farm; and, in addition to that, there is no doubt that allotments add to the comfort of the labourers, which is a matter of no small consideration to the landlord, as the greater the comfort the greater the inducement for him to remain on the property. I cannot conceive, therefore, Sir, any reason which should induce the landowners, if the subject is brought under their notice, to be backward in providing these facilities. But, at the same time, there may be cases of failure where, in spite of these representations, these people are still without the advantages; and in that case the Bill gives power to the Local Authority to obtain the facilities by compulsory means. Now, Sir, that power, under those circumstances, may be obtained in this way. The Bill gives the same power for the purpose of obtaining land under this Act as is given under the Public Health Act, 1885. I am well aware that the fact that the power of the compulsory acquisition of land is contained in this Act at all may be a very grave and serious objection. I am willing to admit that if a Bill upon the subject could be drawn which would be thoroughly effective for its purpose without such a provision I should be the very last person in the world to propose its adoption. But, as far as I am concerned, I am not aware in what way or by what means a Bill can be drawn which will be thoroughly effective without in some way or other containing compulsory powers. The question, therefore, presents itself to my mind in this form. Either we must accept the principle of compulsion in some form, or else we must abandon the idea of legislation on the subject altogether. That being so, I confess that I have no hesitation in introducing a Bill which contains this principle; because, in the first place, I believe legislation is desirable, and if it was ever desirable at all it is especially so at the present time. I will tell the House why. During the last year or 18 months, more than in any former period, there have been a large number of agricultural labourers, in consequence of the severity and continuance of agricultural depression, out of work, more than I ever remember at any other period of my life; and, therefore, the advantages of allotments become doubly great to them. I do not say that they are out of work altogether; but there are many periods of the year, sometimes a month, sometimes three months, or six months, when labourers who used formerly to be employed all the year round are now out of work, and the House will understand that the advantages of allotments to them when they are idle are naturally and exceptionally very great. Then, again, the principle of compulsion in the acquisition of land is by no means a novel one. It has been adopted a great number of years, and everybody knows that for many public purposes land can be acquired by compulsory powers. It is a fact that even so late as last Session, when the Conservative Party were in power, an Act was passed for housing the working classes—called the Housing of the Working Classes Act, in which there were provisions giving power for the compulsory acquisition of land for the building of cottages; and "cottage," according to the definition in that Act, was to include half-an-acre of land for a garden. Therefore, there is, as a fact, absolutely and incontestably nothing new in the adoption of this principle by the Conservative Party, or by any other Party in the House. Well, now, the House is aware that where the principle of compulsion is adopted, of necessity it must be accompanied by certain safeguards; and if hon. Members will do me the favour of looking at Clause 6, they will see that I have provided that land is not to be taken for the purposes of this Act—

> "Which forms part of any garden, park, or grounds attached to a dwelling-house, or which by reason of any special circumstances is let or capable of being let at a rent exceeding the ordinary agricultural rent of land of like quality in the same parish, or which is not situate in the same parish as that for which the allotment gardens are required."

The object of that clause is to cover land which, under special circumstances, it might be undesirable to take for the purpose of allotments. Then, again, there is another limitation in Clause 16, and it is one which I think is very necessary in any measure of this kind. The object of Clause 16 is this. I think it would be most unfair and unjust to landowners generally that a speculator who may have a small strip of land should have the power of running up a number of cottages, for which he is unable to provide half-an-acre of land, in the hope that he will be able to get it from the property of his neighbours; and, therefore, I have inserted Clause 16, which provides—

> "If, after the passing of this Act, any cottage shall be built in a parish without a sufficient garden or allotment attached to it, this Act shall not extend to authorize the compulsory acquisition of land from any person other than the owner for the time being of such cottage, for the purpose of providing an allotment garden for such cottage."

In the Bill the County Authority is described in this way—

> "County Authority means any representative County Authority that may be established in the present or any future Session of Parliament, and until the establishment of such authorities means the Justices of the Peace in Quarter or General Sessions assembled."

Whenever a Local Government Bill is introduced—and I suppose it will be one of these days—the Body created by that Bill will be the authority to deal with this question, but until that time arrives, and as a temporary arrangement, I have provided in the way I have mentioned. Then comes the question of the expense of providing allotments. Well, the expenses of providing allotments are to be obtained in this way, as set forth in Clause 14—

> "The expenses incurred by any County Authority in providing allotment gardens, or otherwise in the execution of this Act for any parish, shall be defrayed, in the first instance, out of the county rates, or out of the money borrowed on the credit of the county rate under this Act, but shall be recouped to the County Authority out of the poor rate of such parish, by such instalments, within such period, and in such manner as the County Authority may determine, and such instalment shall be from time to time levied and recovered in like manner, and with the like powers and incidents, as contributions to an ordinary county rate."

Then these allotments are to be limited, according to the Bill, to half-an-acre apiece. I have put that limit in the Bill, because, as far as I am personally acquainted with the subject, it appears to me that that is the amount of land which would be most adequate to the purpose, and most convenient for those who desire to use the land. I have no bigoted opinions on that point, however; and I shall be glad to hear the opinions of others who are more capable, from experience, of forming an opinion than I am. But it was necessary to state some limit as to size, and I therefore fixed it at half-an-acre. Let me say one word more, and then I will not detain the House any longer. It may be asked when I introduce a Bill of this character—"How is it then—what have been your reasons for opposing other measures of a cognate character?" I have never been taunted with anything of the kind in my presence, but I have seen it stated that I have abandoned all my preconceived and previously expressed opinions upon this subject; but I absolutely and totally deny the statement, for which there is not a shadow of foundation, and I challenge any single person in the House or out of it to produce a single statement from any of my speeches on the subject which is not entirely and completely at one with the observations which I have made on this Bill. I did oppose a Bill upon this question the other day, but it was not because it contained the principle of compulsion. I opposed it because it dealt with an infinitely larger subject than that of allotment, and because it contained provisions giving power to the Local Authority to acquire land for the formation of small holdings to the extent of 40 acres apiece, by methods which appeared to me to be totally unworkable and impracticable, and which, if carried out, will not be to the interest of those whom it was supposed to benefit. I am sure it will be in the recollection of the House that, as far as allotments of this nature are concerned, I have never spoken except in terms which show how strongly I am in favour of the extension of the system contained in this Bill. In conclusion, I desire to add that the proposals which I have made in this Bill to-night are made solely and entirely on my own responsibility; and there is no person in the House sitting on these Benches, or those opposite me, who are committed in any way to the Bill, except those hon. Members whose names appear with mine on the back of it. I believe that there will be a general concurrence of opinion that the extension of the system of allotments throughout the country is a thing which is desirable in itself, and likely to do something, at all events, to improve the condition of the agricultural labourer. Under these circumstances, I hope the House will be disposed to give the Bill its favourable consideration, and will consent to read it a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Chaplin.*)

Mr. ARCH (Norfolk, N.W.): I have not the slightest doubt in my mind that the right hon. Gentleman who has just addressed the House has a very strong feeling for the welfare of my class; but it has surprised me that until very lately this wonderful desire to allow the labourers of the rural villages to have allotments had not been shown by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, and to me it means something which I can scarcely conceive. But, Sir, I rise to oppose this Bill, because, as an agricultural labourer, I think a more flimsy or more worthless Bill was never introduced into this House. It is an insult and a mockery to us. In fact, I do not consider it worth the paper it is printed on. Now, first of all, Sir, I should like to call attention to Clause 2. It appears from the 2nd clause that if a number of labourers in a village want allotments, four ratepayers are to sign their names to apply to the authority—which, of course, the right hon. Gentleman has told us is to be the county magistrates—and these four ratepayers are to apply to the county magistrates for land if one-sixth of the people want it. Why do not the whole sixth make their applications individually? Why should it require four ratepayers, who in most cases are the shopkeepers and farmers who do not require allotments, and who may be unwilling to apply to the Local Authority? Why not leave the power to four agricultural labourers? Now, what has been done since 1882, when the Allotments Extension Bill passed this House? I think three or four were to apply to the trustee of the land, and by the Act they had a perfect right to obtain land; but we have had the utmost difficulty not only in getting the land, but in getting men to ask for it. In some instances they have been absolutely "Boycotted;" and I assert that the Ratepayer Clause in the Bill is an absolute mockery to agricultural labourers. The right hon. Gentleman has made allusion to a great body of gentlemen who have done much for us. I had the honour, the other day, of having a long interview on the subject with the Earl of Onslow. I submitted a scheme to his Lordship, which I believe will be accepted by the noblemen whom he represents. If they do accept that scheme, this Bill will be of no earthly use anywhere. The 2nd clause of this Bill tells me that if I want an allotment I have to ask somebody else to sign a paper requesting that I should have it. I believe in teaching the labourers of this country self-help; if 60 men require land let 60 men apply for it. Well, then, further on in the Bill we find that the county magistrates have the power to decide as to whether the representations are correct or not. Four agricultural labourers have to sign a requisition to the authority; the authority is the county magistrates; the county magistrates have to inquire into the case, and, if satisfied of the truth of the representation, the application can be granted. What an invidious position to place me, as a labourer, in! I have made my appeal through four men; but it happens that they are not right in the representations they make; the consequence is the magistrates say—"We have inquired into the case; we are not satisfied with the representations. Mr. Arch, you shall have no land." I say again, it is a mock benefit offered to my class. Then we have another very important clause—Clause 8. The cottager's allotment garden provided by the County Authority will not exceed half-an-acre, and the person shall not hold more than one allotment. Supposing I am fortunate enough to get half-an-acre, and my next-door neighbour has half-an-acre; my neighbour leaves the parish or dies; his half-acre of land nobody cares to take; his widow does not care to cultivate it, perhaps, because it is too large, and I ask may I have it? No, says the right hon. Gentleman in his Bill.

MR. CHAPLIN: Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, you will allow me to explain. I took great care, in moving the second reading, to say it was necessary to put in some provision as to the size of the allotment; but I added that I was not in any way committed to the size of the allotments, and I was most anxious to hear the opinions of practical men like the hon. Gentleman.

MR. ARCH: Of course, I accept the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman; but I am sure he will pardon me for making my point distinct. The clause provides that the allotment shall not exceed half-an-acre, and that one person shall not hold more than one half-acre at a time. On reading the clause I naturally came to the conclusion that if I had an opportunity of taking a second allotment, if I could make £5 off half-an-acre, and if another half-acre was lying idle, and I could make another £5 off it, the Bill prevents me doing so. I am quite pleased to think the right hon. Gentleman has improved so very much in his views regarding the agricultural labourer. Now, Clause 9 provides that no building of any description shall be erected upon the allotment and used as a dwelling-house or workshop. I should have liked very much that this clause had been much more definite. For instance, my experience, and that of thousands of labourers, has been that when allotments have been asked for they have been generally allotted a mile, or a mile and a-half, or two miles from the village in which the labourer lived. Very well, may I not put up a pigstye upon my allotment, or am I not to be allowed to erect a toolhouse? Am I to be obliged to carry my tools night and morning a mile and a-half each way? Am I not to be allowed to put up any building without the authority having power to pull it down and sell the materials? I say the Bill is a monstrous insult to my class; and I must oppose it strenuously. [*A laugh.*] You may laugh; but I am speaking the voice of thousands of agricultural labourers who have returned hon. Members to this House.

MR. CHAPLIN: I beg the hon. Member's pardon. If he will read the clause again he will see that—

> "No building is to be erected as a dwelling-house or workshop."

A pigstye will scarcely come within that definition.

MR. ARCH: I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will excuse me when I said I wanted the clause more definite.

MR. CHAPLIN: It is quite definite—"dwelling house or workshop."

MR. ARCH: "No building of any description"—[*Cries of* "Read on!"] I will accept the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman, and pass to Clause 11. By this clause it is provided that the County Authority having the management of these allotments shall have the power of adjusting the rents. Now, the Earl of Onslow has distinctly laid it down in his allotment scheme that the land shall be let at the same rent that agricultural land in the district fetches. Nothing of the sort is incorporated in this Bill. [Mr. CHAPLIN: Yes, it is.] There is no fixity of rent. [Mr. CHAPLIN: Clause 10.] Clause 10 does not say the land shall be let at the same rent that agricultural land in the district fetches; but Clause 11 gives the authority the right to adjust the rents. Does it or does it not give the authority power, if they think fit, to raise my rent?

MR. CHAPLIN: May I explain? By the Bill allotments are to be acquired by the Local Authority, and the Local Authority are then to let them to agricultural labourers at a rent not exceeding the ordinary fair agricultural rent of the land of the same quality in the district.

MR. ARCH: I accept the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman; but I certainly must, in justice to my class, move that this Bill be read a second time on this day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Arch.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): I find myself on this occasion taking the same side as the hon. Member for North-West Norfolk (Mr. Arch); but I am afraid I shall oppose the Bill from a point of view which will scarcely be so popular on the Ministerial side of the House as the point of view of the hon. Member. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chaplin), in moving the second reading, said he had no doubt that the principle of compulsion, as here introduced, would be a very great objection in the minds of many Gentlemen sitting on the Opposition side of the House to the Bill. I do not know how it may be viewed by other hon. Members; but I am bound to say that upon all platforms in agricultural constituencies I have always maintained that the principle of compulsion ought not to be incorporated in our system unless it could be shown that there was good reason for the incorporation, and that view I feel myself obliged to hold here on these Benches. Sir, I should not offer any obstinate resistance to the broad principle of compulsion if it were shown that there was a necessity for the compulsory principle being applied on account of landlords and possessors of land declining to let their land upon reasonable terms in any large quantity. I do not think that has been proved. All the evidence we have tends to show that the allotment system is extending; and, so far as I can find out, there are no cases where men are unable to obtain allotments at reasonable rents. I do not mean to say there are no individual cases; but there are no counties, taken as a whole, in respect of which it can be said that labourers are unable to obtain allotments. I think that is a fair statement of the case. ["No!"] Hon. Gentlemen will have an opportunity in a moment of pointing out where I am wrong. I do not propose to speak at any length upon this Bill; but there is one clause I should like to mention, a clause which seems to me to be very objectionable, and in regard to which I think I shall have the sympathy of hon. Members on that side of the House. It is the clause which provides that allotments are to be let to the labourer with the rates and so forth already paid. Now, I should like to remind hon. Members that we are all looking forward—all of us on this side of the House as well as all on that side—to the time when we shall have an improved system of local government, a system under which every man will have a share in the representation and responsibility. Personally, I trust to see the new system speedily adopted; but I am bound to say I do not think it will be right that those men who do not pay a share of the rates should have a direct share in the government of a locality. That will separate responsibility from power; and I maintain that is not a sound principle to adopt. It is perfectly true that as a rule, in the cases contemplated by this Bill, rates are paid by the landlords; but this clause would prevent the landlord transferring the rates to the occupier if, in the event I have indicated, it should be desirable to do so. These are, briefly, the objections I have to this measure, and I felt I ought to give expression to them.

Mr. JOHNS (Warwick, Nuneaton): We have heard from the hon. Member for North-West Norfolk (Mr. Arch) that this is certainly not a Bill that will satisfy the agricultural labourers. We may take him as, perhaps, the best exponent in the House of the feelings of the agricultural labourers, and do that without any disparagement whatever to the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chaplin) who introduced this measure. There are, in my opinion, a great many clauses in this Bill that would be very harassing to the agricultural labourer. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of fair and reasonable terms; but the fair and reasonable terms are to be decided by the Justices of the Peace of the county. [Mr. Chaplin: That is only a temporary arrangement.] My experience during the last Election leads me to believe that if we were to adopt this Bill it would be very much like handing over the lambs to the wolves. To that I cannot be a party. But the question is one which interests a great many Members who are not present to-night; and, therefore, I think the best thing to do, considering the hour (1.35) at which we are now sitting, is to adjourn the debate. I, therefore, beg to move that the debate be now adjourned.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Johns.*)

Lord WILLIAM COMPTON (Warwick, Stratford-upon-Avon): I am very anxious, Sir, to support the Motion for the adjournment of the debate. It seems to me that the Bill, as brought in by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chaplin), will not only not satisfy the agricultural labourers——

Mr. SPEAKER: The noble Lord is not able to speak on the Main Question. The Question before the House is the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. CHAPLIN: I venture to make an appeal to the House. I think it would be very undesirable at this hour of the morning that the debate upon this Bill should be adjourned, especially when I am sure the House perceives that no adequate reasons have been offered by the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Johns) who moved the adjournment, or the noble Lord (Lord William Compton) who supported it, for the adoption of such a course. If it were in Order for me to do so—of course, it is not in Order, therefore I shall not attempt it — it would be the easiest thing in the world to shatter the reasons given against the Bill so far. There may be good reasons to be advanced against the Bill and in favour of the adjournment; but I submit, with all deference and respect to the House, that we have not heard one single word yet which would justify us in assenting to the adjournment of the debate. That being the case, I shall most certainly oppose the Motion for the adjournment. If it be carried, I hope those who are chiefly interested in the Bill—the agricultural labourers—will thoroughly appreciate the action of their professed Friends in endeavouring to defeat the measure.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 106; Noes 91: Majority 15.—(Div. List, No. 103.)

Debate *adjourned* till *Monday* next.

MOTIONS.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (GAS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Borlase, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board under the provisions of "The Gas and Water Works Facilities Act, 1870," and "The Public Health Act, 1875," relating to the Borough of Droitwich, and the Local Government Districts of Marsden and Penrith, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Borlase and Mr. Stansfeld.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 222.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 3) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Borlase, Bill to confirm certain Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the Improvement Act District of Cambridge, the Local Government Districts of Cheshunt and Cleckheaton, the Borough of Portsmouth, and the Rural Sanitary Districts of the Stockport and Wangford Unions (two), *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Borlase and Mr. Stansfeld.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 223.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 4) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Borlase, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the Burnley Joint Hospital District, the Local Government District of Buxton, the Church and Clayton-le-Moors Joint Cemetery District, the Local Government Districts of East Ham and Llangollen, and the Boroughs of Halifax and West Bromwich (two), *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Borlase and Mr. Stansfeld.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 224.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (COUNTY DIVISIONS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Borlase, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order of the Local Government Board under the provisions of "The Redistribution of Seats Act, 1885," relating to the Parish of Misson, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Borlase and Mr. Stansfeld.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 225.]

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT (1875) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Norton, Bill to amend the Friendly Societies Act of 1875, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Norton, Viscount Folkestone, Sir Herbert Maxwell, and Mr. Hoyle.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 228.]

House adjourned at a quarter before Two o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 24*th May*, 1886.

MINUTES.]—SAT FIRST IN PARLIAMENT—The Lord Brougham and Vaux, after the death of his father.

PUBLIC BILLS — *Second Reading* — Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister (62), *negatived;* Oxford University (Justices) * (119).

Report—Bankruptcy (Agricultural Labourers' Wages) * (70); Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham) * (123).

Third Reading — West Indian Incumbered Estates * (115); British North America * (116); Companies Acts Amendment * (121), and *passed.*

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL — *Third Reading*—Local Government (Ireland) (Public Health Act * (83), and *passed.*

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.—(No. 62.)

(*The Duke of Saint Albans.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE DUKE OF ST. ALBANS, in moving that the Bill be read the second time, said, his task was at once easy and difficult—easy because the measure had on so many previous occasions been ably argued in that House, and difficult because he felt unable to tread worthily in the steps of those who had paved the way for him. He spoke with diffidence in the presence of so many learned Lords when he expressed his humble opinion that the Marriage Law of Europe was founded rather on Roman than on Levitical Law. They knew, on Divine authority, that Moses, for the hardness of their hearts, gave great latitude to the Jews in this respect, and they read that King Solomon had 300 wives and 3,000 concubines. He did not say this irreverently, but to show the absurdity of drawing any analogy between the state of society which existed among the ancient Hebrews and that of our day. Polygamy was a custom among the Jews, and existed among the Christian Societies in the East to the 4th century, the Bishops being restricted to one wife. He believed there was nothing in the Old Testament against a marriage with a sister of a deceased wife, except on very far-fetched suppositions; and he asked permission to read the verse in Leviticus on which for many years the Bill was opposed—

> "Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister,"

in the margin the words were "one wife to another"—

> "to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her lifetime,"

which in the Revised Version was rendered—

> "And thou shalt not take a woman to her sister to be a rival to her to uncover her nakedness beside the other in her lifetime."

He could, if necessary, quote Hebrew scholars in support of the plain English reading that where polygamy was allowed this verse prohibited a man marrying two sisters at the same time. The papyrus of the Ancient could not, therefore, be invoked to leave its impress on the parchment of the Modern in the sense adverse to the Bill. In speaking of Roman law, he did not mean that the ecclesiastical adopted the heathen forms, but that the restrictions as to relationship by consanguinity and affinity and previous marriage were, in the main, those which had continued to prevail in modern Europe. With regard to Ecclesiastical or Canon Law, he should be glad to read the opinion given by Lord Stowell; and he believed it was admitted that there was no ecclesiastical lawyer of greater authority than Lord Eldon's brother—

> "When the natural or civil contract is formed it had the full essence of matrimony without the intervention of a priest. It had even in that case the character of a sacrament, for it is a misapprehension to suppose that this intervention was required as a matter of necessity, even for that purpose, before the Council of Trent."

In this respect this Bill, therefore, only reverted to the earlier form and practice of Christianity. The decisions of the Council of Trent were generally adopted at the Reformation, and had regulated the Marriage Law of Europe ever since. He admitted that the authority of the Canons of the Church was against him, though he denied that the Canons could fairly lay claim to the title apostolic. A Canon, dated about 305, forbids marriage with a deceased wife's sister; and though he must remind them that these Canons were only for the guidance of the clergy, he admitted that what was good for the life of a Christian clergyman was good for a Christian layman. But these same Canons of the Church forbad a man to marry a widow, or to marry a second time. He did not agree with Athenagoras, writing 160 A.D., that second marriage was deemed adultery. Now, there were Members of the right rev. Bench who themselves had broken this Canon; but it was difficult to maintain that these Prelates were leading blameless lives, with the authority of their Canons to regulate our Marriage Laws. On the Canons rested the authority of the Table of Degrees which was formulated by Archbishop Parker, and adopted by Convocation in 1603. It was printed in the Prayer Book, to which the clergy declared their assent and consent; but it was not in the sealed compact, and had no more authority than the hymns—namely, the humour of the printer, as it was termed. When Lord Lyndhurst introduced his Bill, in 1835, dealing with this subject, the law stated that marriage with a deceased wife's sister was voidable and void—that was, that either party, if they chose to pay the penalty of making the children illegitimate by bringing an action, could have their marriage declared void in a Court of Law. It was also open to an independent party to do this; but this last could be blocked by a friendly suit. After the death of any parent, however, the children were legitimate, and no proceedings could bar the validity of the marriage. Lord Lyndhurst wished to do away with this uncertainty, and proposed to limit this time to six months in respect of existing marriages, for two years in regard to future marriages. But the Bill was opposed by the right rev. Bench, and to enable it to pass an alteration was introduced declaring all past marriages valid and all future ones void. When it was argued, with apparent weight, that this Bill was retrospective and dealt with only one of the degrees of affinity, he must remind their Lordships that Lord Lyndhurst's Act of 1835 did the same, and yet it was eventually passed in that form at the instance of two of the most eminent Prelates of the day—Blomfield, Bishop of London, and Philpotts, Bishop of Exeter. There were many who desired relief now, and they could as justly demand that change in the law as those in whose interest Parliament granted it in 1835. The law forbidding this marriage, though ancient in principle, had been spasmodic in practice. In Roman Catholic times it could be evaded by a dispensation of the Pope. In the Reign of Mary these marriages were decreed lawful. Elizabeth, for reasons of succession, was opposed to their legality. During the Commonwealth they were valid and legal. In Charles II.'s time they were illegal—During Queen Anne's Reign they were common, and were not absolutely illegal until 1835. Instead of enumerating a long list of our own Colonies and other countries where this marriage was legal, he should best place the facts before their Lordships when he said that our insular opinion in this respect was at variance with the rest of the civilized world, and with two-thirds of the English-speaking countries. The inconvenience was apparent, and though Lord Cairns stated his opinion that a man and woman having solemnized this marriage, being domiciled in the Colonies, would on landing here continue man and wife, yet there could be no legal doubt that their children would be illegitimate as regarded the inheritance of a title or real property. This alone, he thought, should justify the alteration of the law, unless any valid objection could be shown to the contrary. It was a fact worthy of remark that the noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll), who now moved the rejection of the Bill, was a Member of the Government which advised the Royal Assent being given to legalize marriage with a deceased wife's sister in South Australia, Victoria, and Tasmania; and perhaps the noble Duke would explain his absence of responsibility in the matter, and why he opposed for this country what he thought right for those Colonies. A better instance could not be shown of the confusion of the present law than a recent decision of the Indian Courts in "Lopez *v.* Lopez," in which it had been ruled that these marriages were legal between European Roman Catholics, but illegal between European Protestants. He thought, however, that their Lordships would be most influenced in giving their votes by the social view of the case. It was said that no sister-in-law could take charge of a brother-in-law's house if this Bill were to pass. He asked their Lordships, as men of the world, could a young sister-in-law do so now? Would their Lordships allow their daughters, in the present state of the law, to occupy such a position? He was afraid the evil tongue of gossip would prevent it. Proof had been asked for, and doubts raised, whether the working classes desired this Bill. Men who led simple lives adopted simple forms of thought, and working men did not appreciate the subtleties and refinements with which this Bill was opposed. Grief as well as joy was a luxury of wealth, and the poor man must again start on the bread-winner's errand, and experience showed that the natural person he looked to for the care of his children was the sister of his deceased wife. The accommodation of a poor man's house made marriage almost imperative; these marriages constantly occurred in this class, and the parties to them neither lost in public opinion nor in social *status.* He was afraid, if their opponents were not convinced by the Petitions presented in favour of that Bill from the Nonconformist Bodies, which were essentially the church of the working and middle classes, the Trades Congress, the Convention of Royal and Parliamentary Burghs in Scotland, and by the fact that the labour Representatives in the House of Commons were pledged to vote for it—they did not wish to be convinced. He wished to draw special attention to a Petition signed by 9,000 London cabmen, an intelligent class, in favour of this Bill. He was, however, not one of those who thought that they should legislate for any one class, however numerous; but there were abundant proofs that the middle class desired this change, and of this he was sure—there was no body of men who would constrain their sympathy more than the farming class. Their lives were isolated, and of the middle-class marriages of this kind one-fourth were of farmers. They were not a body easily moved; but in Norfolk 4 500 out of 5,500 petitioned through the Prince of Wales; in Buckinghamshire 1,300 out of possibly 1,700, and in Essex there were similar results in favour of the Bill. He had received numerous letters, expressing the feeling of rural districts, hoping the Bill would pass. Those of the wealthy classes who had made these marriages, perhaps, least claimed their sympathy; but there were these extenuating facts. This Bill had several times passed the House of Commons, and would pass it again. The House of Lords, after rejecting it by very small majorities on several occasions, in 1883, passed the second reading, and adopted the unusual course of throwing it out on the third reading. He did not defend these persons, he only excused them, on the ground that they acted on the general supposition that it was only a matter of time before this Bill would become law. He believed a large number of their Lordships were in his favour on the abstract question of legalizing these marriages; but many objected to marriages being declared valid which had already taken place in the teeth of the law. They might be right in theory, but he was not prepared to set aside the precedent adopted by the right rev. Prelates in 1835, as, in effect, the guilty parties would have their marriage made legal the day after this Bill passed, and the entire punishment of their acts would fall on the innocent offspring. When he mentioned that it was estimated that from 800 to 1,000 of these marriages annually took place here, their Lordships would realize what a matter of importance it was to a vast number of persons. This Bill was short, and its meaning clear. It sought to make these marriages in the future valid and the children legitimate by a civil contract. It was retrospective, as was Lord Lyndhurst's Bill, but it avoided disturbing the existing rights of succession and property. If their Lordships elected to amend the Bill by a clause to protect a clergyman officiating at such a marriage, or to prevent his being compelled to celebrate one against his conscientious objections, he should not consider the point vital to the Bill. There was nothing in the Bill, as it stood, to prevent the religious ceremony being performed, and, indeed, in the present state of the law, persons usually desired the blessing of the Church on their at present illegal union. These marriages, however, as the Bill at present stood, would legally hinge on the Register. They were twitted in 1883 that the Bishop of Peterborough remained unanswered the year previous. There were few who would willingly wrestle in debate with the right rev. Prelate; but that speech, shorn of the brilliant rhetoric of which he was so great a master, read in the cold, calm pages of *Hansard*, amounted to this—the Levitical ground of defence so long garrisoned was abandoned, and they were asked to reject this Bill because the sister of the deceased wife might become the step-mother, and might be *injusta noverca*, and that, to prevent any woman incorporating in her own person the double sin of the unjust step-mother and the unkind aunt, they were to reject the Bill. He trusted their Lordships, on the ground of ifs and ands, would not refuse a relief which was earnestly asked for by so large a number of persons. He had endeavoured as briefly as possible, from the Scriptural, the historical, and the social point of view to induce their Lordships to grant the second reading of this Bill. He felt, however, when they would be listening to the stirring tones of the noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll), what a disadvantage the subject incurred by being placed in his hands. He trusted, however, that they would decide on the merits of the case, remembering the Divine precept, "man was not made for the law, but the law for man," and he confidently asked their Lordships to pass the second reading of the Bill.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Duke of Saint Albans.*)

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL said, he could assure the House that it was with extreme reluctance he had consented to move the rejection of this Bill. Not that he had any doubt that it was the duty of the House to reject it, but he was afraid this great cause would suffer in his hands. Their Lordships would not be astonished that he should have taken this view, when he explained what was his own personal connection with this question. He was afraid it was now close upon 40 years since he had the honour of entering that House, and he had found upon caclulation that during that long period of years this Bill, or another Bill with the same object, had been before the House once every three years. During the whole of that time he had voted steadily against it; but he had as steadily preserved a rigid silence upon the subject until comparatively the other day. In his early years in Scotland these marriages were never mentioned except in terms of reprobation and abhorrence. He remembered, when a boy, hearing of a marriage of the kind which had taken place in Glasgow; but the parties could not get admitted into any civilized society. So, after he became a Member of that House, he was brought into close personal connection with the man who introduced this measure into Parliament, Lord Francis Egerton, afterwards a Member of that House under the title of Lord Ellesmere, one whom he loved and respected. About the same time another man whom he greatly respected, Mr. Hook, afterwards the Dean of Chichester, was a supporter of the measure. The views of these two men shook his own opinion on the subject; but he might say that after that date he was conscious that he had voted on authority and tradition, and not upon that personal conviction which arose out of a close examination of the facts. Then came a remarkable event, the speech of his right rev. Friend, whom he was sorry not to see in his place, the Bishop of Peterborough (Dr. Magee). The Bishop of Peterborough had been understood to say that he gave up the Scripture argument, and that made a great impression on his mind. But he believed that the Bishop was wholly misunderstood. What he did say was that he gave up the particular text on which so much stress had been laid. He (the Duke of Argyll) himself had misunderstood him, because he thought the Scripture argument rested mainly on that particular text. He then felt the time had come when it was necessary for every man to look into the subject himself, and he determined to investigate it as far as he could, and he determined to vote in favour of that view of the case which he should find to be supported by the evidence of the case. He had carried on his investigations for several years with a deep personal conviction such as he never had before; and he ventured to ask the House to follow him for a short time along the path he had taken. It was necessary to go to the centre of the question at once, and to ask, What right had the Legislature to prohibit this particular kind of marriage? Since he last spoke on this subject he had been overwhelmed with letters — a correspondence voluminous and, he might also say, painful. He had generally found the question pressed home as the burden of their song—"What right have you to interfere with my individual freedom in this matter? You may not approve of the marriage, and I do not ask you to; but what right have you to prevent individual men from exercising their individual discretion upon the matter?" He still adhered to the principle that society should not interfere with individual freedom except on clear and distinct grounds; but he need not point out that the question of right, as applied to this class of marriage, involved the general question of the right to impose all prohibitory degrees, and he would reply—"We have the same right to interfere in this case as we have to prohibit a man marrying his step-daughter. We have the same right as that by which we draw our prohibitory degrees at all." Every one of these Marriage Laws was a restriction upon individual freedom. That was no accident of one part of the law any more than another. It was of the essence and of the nature of all Marriage Laws. If he was asked upon what the right to interfere depended, he would say it depended upon the fact that on the Law of Marriage in its two great divisions—namely, the conditions under which a man might contract a marriage, and the conditions under which a man might dissolve his marriage—society itself depended. The noble Duke (the Duke of St. Albans) who moved the second reading had said there was no text in the Old Testament prohibiting this marriage. Neither was there any in the New Testament. It had simply been killed by the spirit of Christianity. One of the greatest and most curious difficulties the United States had now to contend against was that a great society had been formed there founded upon polygamy, and that society had been recruited out of our own country and not out of the ranks of native Americans. He would not waste time by arguing the question whether society rested upon the Marriage Laws or not; but there was one illustration which struck him forcibly, for it was one of the most wonderful phenomena of our day. Why was it that every Mahommedan country in the world was in a state of irretrievable decay? He believed that it was a consequence of the practice of polygamy, and because the principle of the family did not exist. Great men of extraordinary virtue and power had risen up and had disappeared because their virtue was not perpetuated. He thought, then, that there could be no question of the right of society to dictate to individual men upon this great question of the Law of Marriage. The next question that had been addressed to him was—"Admitting that you have the right to interfere, why should you exercise it? Why cannot you trust to the natural repugnance of men for marriages that are unseemly?" Here, again, he had to answer that upon the universal consent of all civilized nations they could not trust to the individual will in this matter. In virtue of his prerogative of reason, man had not that guidance of the instinct which made the comparatively perfect wisdom of the beasts. He went on from reason to corruption and debasement, of which the beasts were not capable. All civilized nations that had adopted the Marriage Law at all had adopted it on the assumption—on the willing assumption very often—that in those highest and dearest interests of Christianity the individual conscience and the individual will were incapable of keeping men within the restraints which were the safety of society. He felt that when he had got so far he had already an invincible armoury against many of the arguments put forward in favour of the Bill. As to the argument that marriage was a civil contract, he would like to ask what other civil contract there was which could not be dissolved by the consent of the two parties? If marriage was a civil contract it was a civil contract having most peculiar attributes, and the bargain between man and woman in respect of marriage could not be broken by the consent of the two parties. It was absurd to complain of the prohibition of this marriage on the ground that it interfered with individual liberty. As to the argument about the inconvenience of not allowing a man to marry his deceased wife's sister, what was that compared to the inconvenience involved in the indissolubility of the marriage tie? Had they not all seen young people marry in infatuation, and soon discovering that they were unsuited to each other, yet that unless proof could be given in particular cases the two persons were kept together all their lives by the law of Christian marriage? Therefore, when they spoke of prohibition in regard to the one particular class with which this Bill dealt it was absurd; and he thought that there were few cases in which a man who wanted a second mother for his child could not find a sensible and suitable person to take charge of them without being compelled to marry his late wife's sister. But there was a question more important. Every society was bound to draw up some Marriage Law interfering with individual liberty. When individuals—the units—could not be trusted in this matter, were we sure that the aggregate of society, guided by principles of mere reason and convenience, could be trusted to draw up a sound and sacred Marriage Law? He doubted greatly whether society could safely be trusted to draw up a Marriage Law which should stand the test of generations. Then, had we any knowledge of some enlightened, some golden age, when man was pure, to which we could go back for an example? Of primæval man we knew nothing, unless we accepted the narrative of revelation. According to the majority of our philosophers, primæval man was lower than any existing savage. It was clear, therefore, that we could not go to primæval man for an example. If we could hear the voice which on a memorable occasion uttered the words, "But in the beginning it was not so," we might be guided to the whole of the Marriage Law. Unfortunately, we had now no such voice to listen to, and therefore we must go back to what was best and greatest in the history of our race, and, in the first place, to the history and literature of the Jewish prophets and lawyers. We had lost entirely—thank God for it—that old antipathy to the Jews which was the disgrace of mediæval Christianity, and we had been shocked to see in recent times something like a revival of it in other European countries. We had admitted the Jews into both Houses of Parliament; they were honoured members of our society, and fulfilled, as many Christians did not, the highest duties of citizenship and the highest charities of life. But he regretted to say that the old feeling of contempt was not extinct; instead of religious antipathy we had arrived at the stage of philosophic contempt. People asked why we should go for guidance in these matters to the Jews, saying that they were only a little, insignificant people settled in the extreme Western part of Asia? He was surprised that people should so talk as if they had been the first to discover that the Jews, as a people, were very insignificant. Why, what did their own lawgivers say to them? "The Lord has not set his love upon you nor chosen you because you were more in number than other people." Their lawgivers reiterated over and over again that they were small and insignificant, and drew the inference that a higher power must be supporting them, there being no other way to account for their extraordinary history. From their Lordships, who were supposed to revere the hereditary principle, the Jews could claim special regard. What were their titles of nobility compared with the descent of the Jews? They were proud when they could go back to the Norman Conquest or to the Anglo-Saxon race—dates of yesterday as compared with those of the ancestry of the Jews. He did not understand why the Jews were spoken of disparagingly. What a wonderful thing was their preservation as a separate people! It had been said that they had been preserved by natural causes. That might be so; but from the working of so many natural causes for the preservation of a special people supernatural interference in its favour might be inferred. If a philosopher without any knowledge of Christian doctrines, and without belief in the continuity of the Jewish and Christian Churches, could appear suddenly in this world, he would, he believed, after investigating history, come to the conclusion that if there were a God in Heaven and if the Divine voice had ever spoken to man on earth it had done so through the Jews. He held, then, that it was most reasonable to go back to the history of the Jews for guidance in this matter. Looking at the chapter in Leviticus it was apparent that it laid down a certain principle, and gave certain examples, but that it did not pretend to exhaust the examples. It laid down, first, a prohibition of marrying with nearest kin; and, secondly, laid down the principle that in calculating nearness of kin affinity was equal to consanguinity. There were 12 examples given of forbidden marriages, and of these no less than seven were instances of affinity—such as that of a man marrying with his deceased wife's aunt, the reasoning being that she is his aunt by marriage, and therefore equivalent to his aunt by blood. A marriage of this kind at the present time occasionally occurred on the Continent by special dispensation, and it there provoked no repugnance, though it would here, where it was unknown. He did not wish to dictate to any Member of the House as to what weight he should attach to the practice of the Jewish Church. But if they could find in any part of human history anything like a voice higher than our own it was in the Jewish Marriage Laws, which were so intimately connected with the preservation of the Jews to the present day. But turning away from the Jews to another people, perhaps the noblest specimens of humanity ever seen upon this earth — the Roman people — this prohibition was also found. One was apt to think of the Romans as mere soldiers. They certainly were great soldiers; but there were at the present moment millions of people whose ancestors never saw the gleam of a Roman sword who were now living under the influence of Roman law. The Romans were not mere soldiers; they were the greatest lawgivers and the greatest magistrates that the world had ever seen, and they forbade such marriages as these. So, again, the *Code Civile*, which was one of the noblest works of the First Napoleon, prohibited marriage with a deceased wife's sister. Napoleon engaged the greatest jurists in France, who had escaped from the Revolution. They sat from week to week, and from month to month, calling in all possible assistance that they could obtain, and a meeting was held with regard to the subject of marriage in 1805, with Napoleon himself in the chair. The point arose whether marriage with a deceased wife's sister should or should not be allowed? Some of the Commissioners were of one opinion and others of another. The Minister for Justice argued that such marriages should be prohibited, and stated that the permission given to such marriages by the law of 1792 had brought trouble into families, and was the chief cause of the applications for divorce then before the Courts. Another of the Commissioners demanded the prohibition on the ground of morality, though suggesting that they might be allowed where a dispensation was obtained. Another stated that all the Courts of Justice testified against such marriages. Now, the men composing that Commission were wholly free from Church authority of every kind, and considered this question upon the basis of their experience as men of the world. Napoleon himself spoke, and then it was resolved—first, "that marriages between brothers and sisters-in-law are prohibited;" and, secondly, "that no dispensation for these marriages be permitted." He had now quoted the opinion of the Jews—a nation whose laws were by many believed to be of Divine origin—the opinion of the Romans, the most magisterial people in the world, and the opinion of the jurists of the French Empire, and all these agreed in prohibiting that class of marriages which this House was now asked by this Bill to permit. He would now call to his aid the authority of reason and logic. In the nearest and dearest of all human concerns society was bound by the intelligible method of reason, and to carry it out to its logical results; and he maintained, therefore, that the degree of affinity would stand or fall as a whole. Two years ago he had said that he had never heard any argument brought in favour of this Bill on the ground of reason, or consistency, or logic which would not go equally to the abolition of all degrees of affinity, and he had referred to the case of a man marrying his wife's daughter by a former marriage. The noble Lord who had followed him had expressed his abhorrence of such a marriage, and he had no doubt that that abhorrence was genuine; but persons would rise and ask what right they had to interfere with a man's liberty in this respect? With regard to this case of a step-daughter, they were accustomed to think of cases in which the step-father and the step-daughter were separated by a great number of years, which added to the disgust felt as to the idea of such a marriage. But if they laid down the principle that affinity was nothing, he did not see where they could stop. He remembered a case, which many probably of their Lordships would also recollect, where a young and handsome man had married an elderly lady who had two handsome daughters, from whom he was not separated by any number of years, and whom he had constantly taken out in society. Thus, as far as repugnance went, they could not trust to it the moment that the law was altered. Logic required that if they prohibited any of these degrees they must prohibit them all. In every Church, including all the Reformed Churches and the Churches of the East and West, it was affirmed a logical principle that a man might not marry any woman nearer in affinity to his wife than would be lawful if the affinity were to himself. His noble Friend (the Duke of St. Albans) had talked about the inconsistency and confusion of the present law; but, for his own part, he must say that it required a great deal of boldness to talk about the inconsistency of the law. It was now quite consistent. It was those who wished to change it who would make it inconsistent. Many who had spoken of Lord Lyndhurst's Act seemed to have been grossly misinformed. He used to hear it said in that House that these marriages had been voidable, but not void, and had been made void for the first time by that Bill. He had studied the Bill, and from the beginning to the end of it there was not one word about wives' sisters; the change had been a general one in the whole of the law, and Lord Lyndhurst had not picked out this marriage and made it void. Nine speakers out of 10 seemed to think that this was so; but the case was nothing of the kind. All marriages of affinity, all prohibited degrees, had been on the same footing before Lord Lyndhurst's Act, and they were on the same footing now. There was another part of the Bill which, in his opinion, would add enormously to the muddle and confusion of the law. He did not know whether their Lordships would recollect that on a previous occasion it had been pointed out that if the prohibition against marriage with a deceased wife's sister were withdrawn it would have a most unfortunate effect upon the law of divorce. In this country a woman was not on the same footing as a man with regard to the power of getting a divorce for what was called simple adultery; but in the case of incestuous adultery she could get a divorce. If this Bill were passed a wife would lose the power of getting a divorce when the husband committed adultery with her sister. Lord Houghton had been so conscious of this injustice that in his Bill he had distinctly saved the woman's remedy in such a case. Now they were to be deprived of that remedy, so that a woman who saw an intrigue going on in her own house between her husband and her sister would have no remedy for such a monstrous wrong. He asked legal Members of that House, who had been brought up in one of the noblest of all Professions to interpret the law in a sense of equity between all parties, whether they could vote for a measure which introduced such absolute confusion and such hideous injustice into the relations between man and woman? Before he sat down he wished to refer for a moment to an appeal which had been made by the late Lord Houghton with regard to this matter. Lord Houghton had appealed to the younger Members of that House against the antiquated prejudices of their elders. They would perhaps allow him to say, as one who had spent much time over these matters, that these great problems of humanity could not be solved by reason and common sense without an appeal to any higher authority. If our reason were supplied with false *data* from the passions it must carry us wrong. However indifferent a man might be to the authority of the Christian Church, he could not conceive of anyone disregarding the fact that the Eastern and the Western Churches and the Churches of the Reformation were united on this matter. He admitted that Churches and General Councils had erred, and might err, in matters Divine; but he believed that in this great question of law, this ethical foundation of society, we ought to hear a voice saying—"This is the way, walk ye in it." The voice spoke to us through the ages, from the days of Patriarchs and Prophets, through Roman Emperors and French Republics, and it called upon us to reject this Bill and to stand fast in the ancient ways.

He moved that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

Amendment *moved*, to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months.")—(*The Duke of Argyll.*)

LORD BRAMWELL said, he as emphatically asked their Lordships to read the Bill a second time, and he would give his reasons for saying that the law which it was intended to repeal was a most cruel and mischievous one, and one which was utterly without justification—at least, according to the best opinion he could form. He hoped that the speech which had just been delivered with so much zeal and earnestness, and with so much eloquence by the noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll), would not have the effect intended. No one denied that the State had a right to interfere between men and women in regard to marriage; but what was denied was the right to interfere with this particular marriage. No one denied the right of society to prevent marriages which would be injurious to society. What was denied was the right to prevent the marriage of two persons of fit age and station in life who were in every way fitted to enter into matrimonial relations. In many cases there was the additional fact that the woman was tenderly attached to her bereaved nieces and nephews, and desired to take care of them decently and properly; yet the law, while it did not prohibit the marriage ceremony, said that the marriage was void. He would read to their Lordships a letter he had received, and which he hoped would not be published, as it might interfere with the writer's peace of mind. The letter seemed perfectly genuine, and the writer seemed to have acted with the greatest propriety. He states that he is a tradesman, that his wife died four years ago; her sister had then lived with them for 13 years; and it was the express wish of the dying wife that her sister should take her place. The parties desired to do what was right in the matter, and they waited for some time in the hope that this Bill would become law. Finding that there was nothing in the Word of God against the marriage of a deceased wife's sister, he and the lady proceeded to Switzerland, where the ceremony was celebrated. He, the writer, added that the union was a very happy one, and he was sincerely glad he had taken that step; but, he added, it involved an expense which in his position he could not well afford, and he knew others in a similar position on whose account he should be glad to see an alteration in the law. The man desired to obey the law, and to act according to his notion of religious obligation. His case was that of a large number of other persons, who either went abroad to be married, believing the marriage valid, or who went through the ceremony here, knowing well that, although the ceremony itself was not illegal, the marriage was void. A pamphlet had been issued, in which 100 cases were mentioned in which misery had resulted from inability to marry. The law was cruel—it was also mischievous. In Glasgow there were 27,000 families living in single rooms. In those families many mothers must die in the course of the year. Some woman must be found to take care of the children left. The most natural person to do so was the deceased wife's sister. The noble Duke had written a letter, in which he said that reason and instinct could not be trusted in this matter, showing that they were not opposed to marriage with a deceased wife's sister, yet the law denied it. Had the noble Duke contemplated what must and what did happen? Was not this a mischief and a grievance that ought to be looked to? This was a practical measure; and it was no objection to it to say that it was theoretically imperfect or logically incomplete. As to the suggestion that a man might claim to marry his step-child, he was inclined to think that such a marriage was forbidden. If a man were forbidden to marry his father's widow, who was not his mother, it seemed to follow as a logical consequence that the marriage of a step-parent with a step-child was forbidden, and that the step-father could not marry the step-child any more than the step-son could marry the step-mother. With regard to theological arguments, he admitted that he did not love theologians. If they were to burn all theological books from the earliest down to the last issued, and read the Sermon on the Mount, the world would be more Christian and happy than it was at present. The noble Duke who moved the rejection of the Bill (the Duke of Argyll) gave his assent, when Secretary of State for India, as one of the Cabinet which assented to the Acts authorizing those marriages in South Australia, Victoria, and Tasmania; but when he was asked by the noble Duke who moved the second reading (the Duke of St. Albans) how he accounted for his apparent change of opinion, no answer was given.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: No answer was due. The noble and learned Lord must know perfectly well that these things are done without the slightest reference to individual or personal opinion.

LORD BRAMWELL said, he did not know that that was so. He thought that when a Cabinet gave its assent to a measure it approved of it; but that might not be the case. It was argued from the words of the Scriptural text, "man and wife are one flesh," that there could not properly be a marriage between a man and his deceased wife's sister. The quotation was simply a metaphor, and it was utterly unreasonable to turn a metaphor of that kind into a positive law. The noble Duke said that he (Lord Bramwell) would object to the expression "marriage tie." Not so. But he should object if anybody said there was a tie, and so a man could not be sent to prison without his wife going too. If the expression was treated not as a metaphor, but a statement of a physical fact, then it would follow that if a man and a woman married, the brother of the man and the sister of the woman could not marry. He saw no answer to that. If by the marriage of A and B they became one flesh, then C, who was A's brother, could not marry D, who was B's sister. Then as to the argument from the Old Testament. An Archdeacon had said—

> "As for the Septuagint translation, we know perfectly well that it was not made by one author or by one set of authors, but by different men at different times, and of very unequal knowledge of Hebrew. And it is more than possible that, this being a difficult expression, the translator merely, as in many other instances, rendered the original word for word. Its difficulty and the example of the Septuagint were a double snare to the framers of the authorized version; but though, out of deference to the Septuagint, to which they were in other places much indebted, they gave this rendering in the text, they placed an alternative reading in the margin, which, no doubt, is the true one."

Therefore, according to the Archdeacon, out of deference to the Septuagint, the framers of the Authorized Version put the wrong translation in the text and the right one in the margin. That seemed strange, especially when it was remembered that 99 Bibles out of 100 were printed without anything in the margin. It was suggested that verse 18 prohibited polygamy, which was strange, considering the wives of David and Solomon. But the Revised Version set that right. It showed that the body, and not the margin, of the Authorized Version was correct. But that text was, by implication, a permission of these marriages. To forbid them in the lifetime of the sister was to permit them afterwards. Their Lordships would remember that the third of the Patriarchs married two sisters, Leah and Rachael, both being still living. It was afterwards prohibited that a man should marry the second sister while the first was alive; but was it conceivable, as contrary to nature and instinct, that that marriage of the Patriarch would have taken place if there had been anything intrinsically wrong in it? He could not but think that if it were intended to prohibit polygamy it would have been prohibited in direct terms. The text was interpreted by the Jews themselves in the way he contended for, and who would say that he could interpret the books of the Jews better than the Jews themselves? The text was so interpreted by all the best authorities out of England—in the Colonies, and in general in all foreign countries. In all the countries to which he referred, every authority was in favour of the interpretation for which the supporters of the Bill contended. The law, as it stood, contained some of that spirit which in former days made theologians persecute. The belief of the Jews was that they might marry a deceased wife's sister. The law at present said they could not do so validly. By what possible right could we compel them not to do that which they thought it perfectly reasonable for them to do? But if the law was wrong as to them, it was equally wrong as to the Christian who did not agree with it. Direct persecution for opinion was given up. A man was not punished for not believing in the Trinity or Episcopalianism. He was allowed his opinions on those, why not on this matter? According to the law, as it at present stood, a man could not act upon his opinion. That was persecution. There were many hundreds who would gladly suffer imprisonment and pay a heavy fine if they could make these marriages valid. But these marriages were objected to on social grounds. It was said that perfect intimacy might exist between a man and his wife's sister, the wife living without danger, as they would know that if the wife died they could not marry. The argument was shocking; for it involved that, if they could marry, the intimacy would be dangerous. Was this true of English men and women? Did men indulge a detestable passion for their wives' cousins and friends because after the wife's death they could marry? If every other consideration of decency and morality had been got rid of, was it to be supposed that an inability to marry would deter? Another argument against the Bill was that after the wife's death the sister might live with the husband without reproach, because he could not marry her. But Archbishop Whately had said that it would be much more reasonable to suppose that they could live together without reproach if they could marry. He had called the attention of their Lordships to what he considered to be the evils of the present law, and he would now again remind them that though this law existed here it did not exist in our Colonies. That this provision of the law was a cruel one could not be doubted, and it could not be doubted that it was mischievous. He maintained that neither in the Old Testament nor in the New was there any foundation for this law; and as for the social considerations which had been advanced in support of it they were utterly untenable, and, as far as they were of any value, they went to show that the law should be altered.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY (Dr. BENSON) said, he was sure he was speaking the feelings of the Bench to which he had the honour to belong when he said that they had been proud to listen to the speech of the noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll), and to feel that there were laymen, with clear and powerful intellects, who had followed up conclusions at which they had arrived, and had verified them. The noble Duke had said that he did not know whether he could pass muster with them. He (the Archbishop of Canterbury) could only say that if the noble Duke always looked into the arguments used by the Bench for many generations in such style as he had looked into them that evening, they would be thankful to pass muster with him. He thought it was well that they should realize that the old social fabric was based upon the family group; that the family bond was in harmony with all the conditions and wants of life; and that any prosperous community must be an aggregate of happy families. There was, in fact, little happiness that was not connected with domestic life; and if there was a country in the world where that was true, all were glad to believe that it was true in England. As to what was the family, the present law was clear and distinct. The composition of the family was made up of the married pair and their children, as its centre, and each partner contributed a set of relations, their own intimate blood relations. Those component parts formed the family circle. Each partner contributed a semi-circle. The mark which was set on the members of the family, as regarded one another, was that they who formed its centre might not marry or be given in marriage. That was the safeguard. The children and the parents might not marry each other, nor might they marry the nearest blood relatives of either parent. The actual steps had never been named more simply and clearly than by Cranmer, in a State Paper addressed to Thomas Cromwell in 1536. He said, regarding the family, that the women whom a man should not marry were his mother and mother-in-law, his daughter or daughter-in-law, his sister or sister-in-law, his aunt or aunt-in-law, his niece or niece-in-law. That was clear, and intelligible, and consistent. But the proposal now before them would except from the family circle one single woman in an arbitrary way. The first woman, in fact, chosen for him to be allowed to marry was the person whom, since his marriage, and possibly prior to it, he had always spoken of as his sister. That was without precedent in the Christian Church, it was unknown to the Roman Law, and it was unknown to Judaism. What he wished now to insist upon was that, if this marriage was not immoral, it was still imperfect in principle. Such a step was a retrograde step, going back beyond anything that was known of law. It would, in fact, constitute in public opinion an inferior class of marriages. Before he went further on this subject, he ventured to declare that the consciences of the poor on this subject in no way differed from the consciences of the rich. No doubt, opinion would be divided among the poor; but he was satisfied that the number of the poor who wished for the Bill to pass was not larger in proportion than that of the rich. The working man was always brought forward as a sort of spectre on occasions of this sort, or he was thrown in as an unknown quantity to make up some weight that was felt to be too light to pass without him. But he ventured to think it was insulting to the working man to be put forward in this case as in favour of a Bill which really had its origin with a few rich people. He recollected that the noble and learned Lord (Lord Bramwell) who had just sat down said two years ago that if the prohibition was to be found in the Scripture there was an end of the matter. That statement made a great impression on him at the time, because he supposed it to imply that the noble and learned Lord knew and had accurately examined what was in the Scripture. He found himself considerably relieved, however, by one of the noble and learned Lord's arguments that evening, which proved that in this supposition he had been mistaken. He himself had come to the opposite conclusion, based not upon a single text, but upon the distinct construction of the entire context. Moreover, the noble and learned Lord had not observed that there were two classes amongst the Jews themselves, and therefore his whole argument, as to the interpretation of the Jews, came to nothing. Now, as to the Levitical Law, he wished to inquire whether it sanctioned the idea of the family we had in England; and whether the Marriage Law in Leviticus rested on the same foundations as the law of England? It was an error to suppose that the controversy turned upon one verse in Leviticus. That was a very difficult and obscure text; the expression in it on which all turned was continually used metaphorically, and there were two schools among the Jews, as among other scholars, taking different views as to its force here. The interpretation of the text by the Jews, therefore, had no determining weight. In support of his case he preferred to take a broad and complete view of the principle of the whole chapter. It said that among the nations dispossessed the law of nature, as affecting the family, had been violated. Now, the family treated of was exactly the same as existed in England at this moment, and therefore the law of nature referred to in the chapter was applicable to the English family. In the list of prohibitions, each case stated included, as the noble and learned Lord himself maintained, the corresponding case. The series stated was not the double series. Thus a son was forbidden to marry his mother; but it was not stated that a daughter was not to marry her father. No one doubted that it was included. The single case was given for the sake of brevity. If one pair were expressly forbidden to marry, the corresponding pair were under the same prohibition. Throughout, the same method of stating appeared. A brother was forbidden to marry his brother's wife; accordingly, it was clear that a sister must not marry her sister's husband. If it was not meant that a sister should not marry her sister's husband, then either the sister-in-law was out of the family, while the brother-in-law was in it; or else she was in the family, and the one sole person in it to whom the rules regulating the marriage relations of its members did not apply. The dilemma was absolute, and there was no ground for either of those suppositions. The principle upon which the prohibited marriages were forbidden was stated nearness of kin, and that nearness of kin included affinity just as it did consanguinity. More cases of affinity were expressly named as forbidden than cases of consanguinity. Not only so; the 14th verse laid down that a man must not marry his father's brother's wife; and, read in conjunction with the 6th verse, it brought in express terms the marriage of affinity into the category of marriages of consanguinity. "Thou shalt not marry her, she is thine aunt." Yet she is no blood relative. Some people said—"If this marriage is wrong, what do you make of the marriage which is commanded between a man and the widow of his brother who has left no children?" His reply was that the case of this childless widow was not only an exception, but that it was treated as an exception. The union was never regarded as marriage; and the child born of it was treated as the son of the deceased brother, whose

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heir he was. The brother of the deceased man was held bound to give his brother an heir to inherit his property, and the child was not the heir of his natural father. Again, there was only one instance of the application of this law in the Scriptures. It was in the Book of Ruth; and the person who married the deceased man's widow was not his brother, but a near relation. Then, as to the argument based on the statement that husband and wife were one flesh. Whatever the noble and learned Lord might rule, it was by no means clear that physiologists felt certain that the expression was wholly a metaphor; but supposing it were, metaphors were used to illustrate principles, and the principle which this one illustrated was that the two heads of the family must not marry blood relations. It affected no one else. It was absurd to deduce from this, as some people did, in order to throw ridicule on the one-flesh argument, that the relations of the wife must not marry the relations of the husband. But now, setting aside the inferences to be drawn from Scripture, was it expedient that the Bill should pass? Was it expedient that the Legislature should create an isolated class of marriages which would be held by a large portion of the community to be a violation of the family tie and of Scripture? The greatest happiness of the greatest number, the principle upon which all social legislation ought to be undertaken, would not be promoted by this measure. That would be a grievous day when, according to the consciences of the large population, represented by the moral and religious teachers of the nation, Nonconformists as well as Churchmen, the Divine law and the law of England should be at variance. He did not believe that any earnest Nonconformist would strive to wound the Church for sake of gaining a momentary triumph. But supposing that the Church's influence could be lessened by the acceptance of legislation such as was proposed, what would be the next step? The views of the Church having been disregarded, what set of opinions could afterwards be sure of respect? Any increase of happiness that the passing of the Bill would create would be bought at the price of very heavy sorrow, for it would cause the breaking up of many homes. He had received many letters on this subject—one of them from a lady, who wrote that she had recently recovered from an illness, during three weeks of which she was hanging between life and death; she had two sisters devoted as sisters to her husband and children, but they would never consent to fill her place; she had known that if she died those sisters would have remained and mothered her children; but if the Bill were to pass they must leave the house, and there would be no one to take care of her orphans. There were many similar cases to this. On the other hand, if the Bill passed, there would, no doubt, be rejoicing on the part of the few who had broken the law, rejoicing at the triumph over the experience of so many civilized ages; the rejoicing of persons who had sacrificed their reputation and risked all on the prospect that the old law of England might be changed. But, even if the law were changed, these marriages, however legal, would never be as other marriages in the view of almost all earnest religious people; they would still be, as they were new, ashes in the mouth.

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Sudley, L. (*E. Arran.*)
Suffield, L.
Teynham, L.
Tredegar, L.
Truro, L.
Tweedmouth, L.
Vaux of Harrowden, L.
Vernon, L.
Walsingham, L.
Wenlock, L.
Wentworth, L.
Westbury, L.
Wolverton, L.
Worlingham, L. (*E. Gosford.*)

NOT-CONTENTS.

Canterbury, L. Archp.
York, L. Archp.

Buckingham and Chandos, D.
Grafton, D.
Leeds, D.
Newcastle, D.
Northumberland, D.
Richmond, D.

Abercorn, M. (*D. Abercorn.*)
Bath, M.
Bristol, M.
Bute, M.
Exeter, M.
Hertford, M.
Salisbury, M.

Annesley, E.
Aylesford, E.
Beauchamp, E.
Belmore, E.
Buckinghamshire, E.
Cairns, E.
Carnarvon, E.
Coventry, E.
Dartmouth, E.
Devon, E.
Doncaster, E. (*D. Buccleuch and Queensberry.*)
Essex, E.
Gainsborough, E.
Haddington, E.
Hardwicke, E.
Harewood, E.
Harrowby, E.
Iddesleigh, E.
Lanesborough, E.
Lindsay, E.
Lindsey, E.
Lucan, E.
Manvers, E.
Mar and Kellie, E.
Morton, E.
Mount Edgcumbe, E.
Nelson, E.
Northesk, E.
Orkney, E.
Poulett, E.
Powis, E.
Ravensworth, E.
Rosse, E.
Scarbrough, E.
Selborne, E.
Sondes, E.
Stanhope, E.
Strathmore and Kinghorn, E.
Tankerville, E.
Waldegrave, E.
Wilton, E.

Bangor, V.
Bridport, V.
Clancarty, V. (*E. Clancarty.*)
Cranbrook, V.
Halifax, V.
Hardinge, V.
Hawarden, V.
Sidmouth, V.

Bangor, L. Bp.
Bath and Wells, L. Bp.
Chester, L. Bp.
Chichester, L. Bp.
Durham, L. Bp.
Gloucester and Bristol, L. Bp.
Hereford, L. Bp.
Lichfield, L. Bp.
Llandaff, L. Bp.
London, L. Bp.
Newcastle, L. Bp.
Oxford, L. Bp.
Rochester, L. Bp.
St. Albans, L. Bp.
St. Asaph, L. Bp.
St. David's, L. Bp.
Truro, L. Bp.
Winchester, L. Bp.

Arundell of Wardour, L.
Ashford, L. (*V. Bury.*)
Bagot, L.
Balfour of Burley, L.
Blachford, L.
Botreaux, L. (*E. Loudoun.*)
Brancepeth, L. (*V. Boyne.*)
Braybrooke, L.
Brodrick, L. (*V. Midleton.*)
Brougham and Vaux, L.
Carysfort, L. (*E. Carysfort.*)
Chelmsford, L.
Clanbrassill, L. (*E. Roden.*)
Clifton, L. (*E. Darnley.*)
Coleridge, L.
Crewe, L.
Denman, L.
Deramore, L.
Digby, L.
Dinevor, L.
Douglas, L. (*E. Home.*)
Egerton, L.
Ellenborough, L.
Esher, L.
Fermanagh, L. (*E. Erne.*) [*Teller.*]
Forbes, L.
Forester, L.
Foxford, L. (*E. Limerick.*)
Gage, L. (*V. Gage.*)
Halsbury, L.
Hammond, L.
Harlech, L.
Hartismere, L. (*L. Henniker.*) [*Teller.*]
Hawke, L.
Herries, L.
Heytesbury, L.
Hillingdon, L.
Howard of Glossop, L.
Kenlis, L. (*M. Headfort.*)
Kenyon, L.
Ker, L. (*M. Lothian.*)
Lamington, L.
Massy, L.
Montagu of Beaulieu, L.
Moore, L. (*M. Drogheda.*)
Mostyn, L.
North, L.
O'Neill, L.
Oranmore and Browne, L.
Polwarth, L.
Ponsonby, L. (*E. Bessborough.*)
Raglan, L.
Rayleigh, L.
Ross, L. (*E. Glasgow.*)
Saint Oswald, L.
Scarsdale, L.
Silchester, L. (*E. Longford.*)
Sinclair, L.
Somers, L.
Stratheden and Campbell, L.
Sundridge, L. (*D. Argyll.*)
Templemore, L.
Trevor, L.
Wigan, L. (*E. Crawford and Balcarres.*)
Windsor, L.
Winmarleigh, L.
Zouche of Haryngworth, L.

Resolved in the *negative.*

Bill to be read 2^{a} on *this day six months.*

House adjourned at a quarter before Eight o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 24*th May*, 1886.

INUTES.] — Select Committee — Divorce Bills, *nominated.*

upply—*considered in Committee*—£2,266,400, on Account, Civil Services and Revenue Departments; Army Estimates; Navy Estimates.

ublic Bills — *Committee* — Losses by Riot (Compensation)* [209]—r.p.; Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers) Act (1875) Amendment * [211]—r.p.

QUESTIONS.

POST OFFICE—SECRECY OF TELEGRAMS.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) sked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the attention of the Postnaster General has been called to the ollowing statements made by witnesses xamined by Sheriff Ivory, and published by that gentleman in a pamphlet entitled "A Report by the Sheriff of Inverness, Nairn, and Elgin to the Commissioners of Supply of Inverness-shire:"—

> "Deputy Chief Constable Aitchison: 'When e (Captain Mahon) came he sent for the Inspector and myself, and we met him then and n several occasions afterwards. On these ccasions he showed us various telegrams, for some of which he applied to Sheriff Spens for authority to show us, but he had also shown several to us before he got such authority;
>
> "'A day or two afterwards he came to us with a bundle of telegrams. . . . . I think he showed us these telegrams on this second occasion;
>
> "'Captain Mahon showed us (Inspector Macdonald Gillander and me) another telegram on a third occasion. . . . . I asked Captain Mahon to allow me to get a copy of these telegrams. He wired for leave to the secretary at Edinburgh, and he showed me the reply, telling him not to show the telegrams to anyone. I then told him he must show them privately to the Chief Constable at Inverness and to the Sheriff in Edinburgh, and he said he would do so;'
>
> "Deputy Procurator Fiscal Gillander: 'Captain Mahon showed me a telegram. He showed me a batch of twenty or thirty telegrams, all or most in different handwriting, one from the Postmaster, Portree, and the others from the crofters and their friends.'"

whether Captain Mahon is "a person having official duties connected with the Post Office;" and, if so, whether he is forbidden by the Electric Telegraph Act, 1868, Section 20, to disclose or in any way make known the contents of telegrams, except under certain conditions prescribed in the Act; whether in any, and, if so, in how many, of the instances quoted Captain Mahon had obtained the authority prescribed by Law for the production of the telegrams; and, if their production was made without legal authority, what steps the Postmaster General proposes to take for the vindication of the provisions made by Law for the secrecy of telegrams and the punishment of Post Office officials who disclose their contents or those who induce such officials to make such disclosure?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): In producing these telegrams, without the necessary legal authority for so doing, Mr. Mahon, who is an Assistant Surveyor of the Post Office, acted under a mistaken sense of his duty. He believed that in showing the telegrams to the police he was not only not contravening the law, but furthering the ends of justice. Mr. Mahon has been informed that he was in no way authorized to disclose the telegrams in question; but the Postmaster General is advised that in the circumstances it would not be proper to institute proceedings against him under the Telegraph Acts.

Dr. CAMERON said, that on the Civil Service Vote for the Telegraphs he would call attention to that matter.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—PENSIONS.

Sir THOMAS ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether men of the Royal Irish Constabulary retiring on superannuation allowance are curtailed in their pensions for offences in respect of which they have been already punished; whether a Committee appointed in 1882 to inquire into the grievances of the force recommended that no member of the force should be curtailed in his pension whose record had been free for five years previous to his retirement; whether the finding of the said Committee was approved of by Government; and, what action will be taken with regard to any members of the Royal Irish Constabulary to whom the finding of the said Committee would apply?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The rule of the force, based upon the Report of the Committee of 1882, is that unfavourable records followed by continued good conduct shall have, as a rule, no effect upon pension. The Pension Board, in considering each case under this rule, make their recommendation upon all the facts represented to them; and I am informed that it is their practice to act upon the rule in a manner characterized by leniency rather than strictness. There are, of course, instances in which, owing to misconduct, not followed by a term of good behaviour, the pension is curtailed; and the Inspector General informs me that cases sometimes occur in which men of bad character become entitled to, and claim to retire on, pensions, although a short time previously they had been warned for dismissal. In such cases it would, of course, be manifestly unjust that the pension should be the same as that given to men of exemplary character; but cases of this nature, I am assured, are quite exceptional.

INCOME TAX (GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND).

SIR JOSEPH M'KENNA (Monaghan, S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, with reference to the incomes set forth in the Statistical Abstract for England, Scotland, and Ireland respectively, under Schedule (B.), Whether (apart from all deductions and allowances) there are in fact incomes under that Schedule in Ireland which exceed in gross amount a fifth of the gross amount of incomes under the like Schedule for England; and, whether, as a matter of fact, the gross amount of incomes under Schedule (B) in Ireland exceed by more than 30 per cent. the gross amount of incomes under the like Schedule in Scotland?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): I have to answer both the Questions put by my hon. Friend in the affirmative.

SCOTLAND—ISLAND OF SKYE—SCHOOL AND POOR RATES.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Argyll) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether the Returns promised by the Secretary for Scotland on 1st March last, showing the arrears in the Island of Skye of School and Poor rates, under the heads of landlords, tenants paying over £30 a-year of rent, and tenants under £30, will now be laid upon the Table, and brought down to 30th April last?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): The information in the possession of the Treasury and the Secretary for Scotland will be laid on the Table shortly. If any further information is obtained on the same subject it will also be laid.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—DISTURBANCES NEAR COOKSTOWN.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Is it the fact that, on 15th May, some Derry Catholics returning from Cookstown market were set upon without provocation and badly beaten by the Orangemen of Coagh, county Tyrone, and that a woman named Rooney was dangerously cut on the head; were the Orangemen, although fully identified, admitted to bail by Mr. Nagle, R.M., although one of them, Nesbitt, was proved to have fired several shots from a revolver, and although the police protested, and produced a doctor's certificate as to the dangerous condition of the wounded men and woman; and, can he state what is the practice as to bail in the South of Ireland in similar cases?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): A rather serious collision took place on the occasion mentioned in the Question between a party of Catholics and a party of Protestants, and some severe injuries were inflicted upon two persons, one of each party, who have since been certified to be in danger. As is usual in such cases, each party blames the other as the aggressors. The matter will be investigated at Petty Sessions to-morrow. Members of both parties were arrested by the police at the time, and were brought before Mr. Nagle, the Resident Magistrate, who, in the exercise of his discretion, took bail for the appearance of the accused on both sides.

ARMS (IRELAND) ACT—LICENCES.

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of

Ireland, If it is true that two guns which have been seized at the house of a man named Denis Murphy, who resides at Denyerkane (near Bantry), have been returned; if Murphy or his sons had licences empowering them to keep these guns at the time they were seized; if Messrs. Cronin and Warburton, both resident magistrates, distinctly stated that the guns would not be returned to the Murphys; if Mr. Cronin further stated that, from what he knew of Timothy Murphy, he considered he was not a fit person to be entrusted with firearms; if, in opposition to the wishes of the resident magistrates, Messrs. J. W. Payne and J. E. Barrett, both local justices of the peace, have signed certificates for Denis Murphy, junior, and Timothy Murphy, enabling them to procure licences to carry firearms; whether Denis Murphy, junior, awaits his trial at the next assizes to be holden in the city of Cork for firing at, with intent to kill, a respectable young man named William Cottes; if the police are aware that Denis Murphy, junior, and Timothy Murphy have on various occasions presented revolvers and threatened to shoot various persons; and, if the above statements are true, whether the licences given to the Murphys will be revoked, and the attention of the Lord Chancellor will be called to the action of the local magistrates in connection with this matter?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): On April 30 last the police seized two guns in the house of Denis Murphy, senior, as he had no licences to keep them. Subsequently his two sons obtained the usual recommendations from Messrs. Somers-Payne and Barrett, were granted licences limited to their father's farm, and had the guns returned. A prosecution is pending against the father for having these arms without a licence. The Resident Magistrates did not state that the guns would not be returned, and Mr. Cronin's observation was, I believe, to the effect that Timothy Murphy was an untrustworthy person. Mr. Warburton had no option, under the sub-section of the Act, but to give the licences on the certificate of two magistrates. That sub-section the Government propose to omit from the Continuance Act. I understand, however, that it was not in opposition to Mr. Warburton's wish that the licences were given. The question of revoking Denis Murphy, junior's, licence must await the result of his trial. The police are not aware that on various occasions the Murphys presented revolvers and threatened to shoot several persons.

ADMIRALTY—PAY OF COASTGUARDSMEN.

THE EARL OF MARCH (Sussex, Chichester) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, If he can see his way to recommend that Coast Guardsmen should not be deprived of the two pence per diem increase of pay which seamen become entitled to after ten years' service?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. HIBBERT) (Oldham): This question has been very frequently considered; but I do not think I should be justified in holding out any hopes to the noble Lord that the 2*d.* a-day, re-engaged pay, can be allowed to the Coastguard. This pay is granted as an inducement to men who serve in all parts of the world to re-engage. Moreover, the conditions of pay as well as of service in the Coastguard differ very materially from those of the Fleet. The applications for entry are very numerous, showing that in spite of the present regulations as regards pay it is not an unpopular branch of the Service.

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL—THE CIVIL SERVANTS.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he will lay before Parliament a complete list of the Civil Service appointments which, under the Bill for the future government of Ireland, are to be placed at the disposal of the future Irish Government, together with the salaries or wages attached to them; and, whether any provision will be made to give the present holders of such situations redress in case of dismissal for political reasons?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I really do not think it would be reasonable to put upon the Public Departments, whose time is already pretty fully occupied, the duty of preparing a list which, as I have previously explained to my hon. Friend, is already practically given in the Civil Service Estimates. The intention is that the whole of the Civil servants in Ireland, with the exception of those who may be in the service of the Imperial Government, will be under the Government of Ireland, and provision is made in the Bill now before the House to meet the case of those whose services may be dispensed with.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would object to the number and a lump sum being given, which it would not perhaps take so much time for the Office to furnish?

MR. JOHN MORLEY: No. I think I might supply the hon. Gentleman with that amount of information if he would put another Question in a day or two.

POLICE SUPERANNUATION BILL.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If he will name the day upon which he will introduce the Police Superannuation Bill, which it was anticipated would be brought in at the latest immediately after Easter, and if the Scotch Police will be included in its provisions?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CHILDERS) (Edinburgh, S.): I presume the hon. Member was not in the House when I recently stated, in reply to my right hon. Friend the Member for Essex (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson), that having been pledged to bring in four Bills after Easter I had already brought in two, that I should in a few days ask leave to bring in a third—the Quarries Bill—and after that would come the Pensions Bill. I have nothing to add to-day to this answer.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—EDENDERRY INFIRMARY.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether a man named Delahunt was admitted to the Edenderry Infirmary, and left nine hours without medical attendance, though known to be in a critical condition; whether the said Delahunt died sixteen hours after admission; whether the medical officer was absent on this and several other occasions without the permission of the Board of Guardians; and, whether he will direct the Local Government Board to institute a sworn inquiry into the conduct of the said medical officer?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): It appears that Delahunt was admitted to the workhouse at 1 o'clock on Sunday, April 11, and the doctor was sent for, but was unable to attend, as he had received a sick call and did not return until 7 in the evening. He then visited the patient, who died at 4 o'clock on the following morning. The police did not see any necessity for an inquest. The Local Government Board are not aware that this medical officer is in the habit of absenting himself without notice. The case does not appear to the Local Government Board to call for further inquiry.

NAVY (ORDNANCE, &c.)—NAVAL GUNS.

COMMANDER BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether any heavy guns, of 35-tons and upwards, have recently been subjected to a course of firing under such circumstances of continuity and rapidity as may reasonably be supposed they would be called upon to undergo in action; what guns have been so tested; and, have the results proved satisfactory?

THE SURVEYOR GENERAL OF ORDNANCE (Mr. WOODALL) (Hanley) (who replied): The guns to which the hon. and gallant Member refers are presumably the 12-inch. These have been tested at Shoeburyness and on board Her Majesty's ships *Handy*, *Colossus*, *Conqueror*, and *Collingwood*, in addition to the usual proof rounds. Thirty-three rounds were fired in the *Handy* from one gun, 16 in one day; 10 rounds from each of the four guns of the *Colossus*, the practice extending over two consecutive days; 13 rounds on one day from the two guns of the *Conqueror*; and 12 rounds on one day from each gun of the *Collingwood's* fore turret. It may be observed that the 12-inch guns for land service of the same design have been similarly tested. The gun at present at Shoeburyness has fired 108 rounds, 15 in one day, and is in good condition. The other heavy breech-loading guns at present in the Navy are the 8-inch and 9·2-inch. These have been similarly tested. One of the former fired 67 rounds of battering charges in one day, the last five being in 4½ minutes. One of the latter fired 20 rounds in one day, the last eight being delivered within 10 minutes.

Commander BETHELL inquired whether the guns had been allowed continuously to heat?

Mr. WOODALL said, he thought that the answer he had given was conclusive in regard to that point—namely, that eight rounds had been fired within 10 minutes, and five rounds within 4½ minutes.

Mr. CARBUTT (Monmouth, &c.) asked whether there had been full charges in each instance?

Mr. WOODALL said, that he did not know positively, but presumably they had been the ordinary charges.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT — RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOL BOARD SCHOOLS.

Sir R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, Why the Return to an Address of this House as to the provision made by each School Board in England and Wales respecting religious teaching and religious observances in School Board schools, which has just been presented, has been presented in such a very imperfect state as compared with like Returns asked for in 1874 and 1879; and, what steps the Government propose to take to make the Return complete.

The VICE PRESIDENT (Sir Lyon Playfair) (Leeds, S.): A Return moved for by Lord Colchester was made to the House of Lords in 1884, No. 1. The Return just presented is a Continuation Return and as such is complete.

SECRET SERVICE MONEY.

Mr. ALBERT GREY (Northumberland, Tyneside) asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, What are the sums of public money handed over annually to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury, apart from his salary; whether any portion of such money is exempt from the scrutiny of Government audit; whether it is true that a large proportion of such money is regularly applied to electioneering or party purposes; and under what Act or Votes the power is derived which places such money at the disposal of the Parliamentary Secretary?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): A sum of £10,000 is handed over annually to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury under the Act 1 *Vict.* c. 2. This sum is granted for Secret Service, and the expenditure of it is in consequence not subjected to the scrutiny of the Comptroller and Auditor General. The money being granted for Secret Service, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury has no information as to the objects to which it is applied. The sum in question is placed at the disposal of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury under the authority of Section 15 of 1 & 2 *Vict.* c. 2, which enacts that it shall be lawful for the Commissioners of the Treasury to direct the issue out of the said Consolidated Fund, to such person or persons as shall be named in any warrant or warrants under their hands to receive the same, the sum of £10,000 in each and every year, to be applied to the same purposes and under the same authority as the sum of £10,000 per annum formerly charged upon the 4th Class of the Civil List for Home Secret Service has heretofore been applied. The subject of Secret Service has been before the Committee of Public Accounts, and it has also been before the late and present Governments, and a Treasury Minute has been passed, of which the following are the material portions:—After a recital that the Treasury has had under consideration the remarks made by the Public Accounts Committee in their second Report, dated July, 1885, on the expenditure out of the Vote for Secret Service, and also of the sum charged for the same purpose upon the Consolidated Fund, and after a statement that under the arrangements made with regard to this Vote, in pursuance of the Exchequer and Audit Act, the duty of the Treasury is practically restricted to obtaining from the Ministers who expend the money, certificates of the amount spent, to serve instead of vouchers for the expenditure, the Minute proceeds—

> "In pursuance of this duty, my Lords propose that this certificate should in future be worded as follows—'I hereby certify that the amount actually expended by me, or under my directions, for Secret Service in the year ended 31st March 18—, was £ , and that the

balance in my hands on the said 31st March was £ . And I further solemnly declare that the whole of the sum so expended has been paid for purposes to which, in my belief, Parliament intended that Secret Service money may be applied, and that no part of the same has been paid for any service which has been or could properly have been provided by an ordinary Vote of Parliament.' My Lords further consider that it will be right to extend the rule which applies to Voted Secret Service to the sum charged on the Consolidated Fund for similar purposes; and they will instruct their Parliamentary Secretary accordingly."

MR. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guilford): May I ask if any balance has ever been surrendered; and, if so, what balance was surrendered on 31st March last?

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: I informed the House that, being Secret Service money, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury is in a hopeless state of ignorance on the subject.

MR. BOORD (Greenwich): What is the date of the Treasury Minute?

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: I cannot give the exact date, but it is within the last six weeks or two months.

SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.): The hon. Gentleman stated that the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury were to say by warrant to whom this money was to be paid. I would ask has any warrant been signed by them saying it is to be paid to the Financial Secretary?

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: Since Mr. Burke passed the Act, in 1782, it has always been paid to the Parliamentary Secretary of the Treasury.

MR. MITCHELL HENRY (Glasgow, Blackfriars): In consequences of the answers of the hon. Gentleman, I beg to give Notice that on the earliest opportunity I will move—

> "That it would be an abuse, and contrary to public policy, that any money raised by taxation should be expended by the Government of the day for election purposes."

NORTH AMERICA — CANADIAN FISHERIES.

SIR FREDERICK STANLEY (Lancashire, N., Blackpool) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether he is able to give to the House any further information as to the recent fishery disputes in North America; and, whether Her Majesty's Government are ready to offer their assistance towards the friendly settlement of such questions between the Dominion Government of Canada and the United States Government as have now arisen, or may hereafter arise, under the terms of the Convention of 1818, or otherwise?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. OSBORNE MORGAN) (Denbighshire, E.): The circumstances under which the American schooner *David J. Adams* was seized by the Canadian Authorities were detailed by me to the House on May 13 in an answer to the hon. Member for Central Sheffield (Mr. Howard Vincent). They were given in a telegram received from the Governor General of Canada on the preceding day, which I read to the House. A despatch which we have subsequently received substantially confirms this telegram. Since then another American vessel, the *Ella Doughty*, is stated in the newspapers to have been seized; but we have as yet no official information on the subject of this seizure. Her Majesty's Government have been informed by telegram that a despatch from our Minister at Washington, embodying a communication from the United States Government on the Canadian Fishery Question, is on its way to this country. That communication, when it arrives, will be considered by the Government in a friendly spirit and with a due regard for the complete maintenance of the fishery rights of our Canadian fellow-subjects. I hope, therefore, before long to be in a position to give the House further information on the subject.

ARMY QUARTERMASTERS.

COLONEL DUNCAN (Finsbury, Holborn) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he intends doing anything with reference to Army Quartermasters, by way of improving both their position while serving and the rules as to their pensions on retirement?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN) (Stirling, &c.): The position of the Army Quartermasters was considered in 1881, and a Warrant was issued improving it in many respects. It has now been represented that in some points that Warrant has not been completely satisfactory; and having received a statement on the subject, I invited one or two officers of the Department to examine and report upon it. I have received their Report, and it is now being considered.

INLAND REVENUE—INCOME TAX ON FOREIGN RESIDENTS.

Colonel HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, in the case of Foreigners marrying English subjects and permanently residing in England, he will take into consideration the justice of exempting them from payment of the Income Tax which is levied in this Country on their incomes derived from property in their own Country, where an Income Tax has already been imposed?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt) (Derby): An English subject owning property abroad would pay Income Tax upon the revenue he derived from it here, and a foreigner residing here and owning property abroad under the same conditions would be required to pay Income Tax in this country.

EVICTIONS (SCOTLAND)—ARDNAMURCHAN.

Mr. MACFARLANE (Argyll) asked the Lord Advocate, If his attention has been called to the eviction of a tenant named Henderson, in Ardnamurchan, by a body of soldiers and sheriffs' officers; whether his wife, who was ill in bed, was carried into the open air by the soldiers, and left with her children without shelter; and, if he will cause inquiry to be made as to the causes which have led to this operation of the Law, which has created much feeling in the district?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.), in reply, said, that Notice of this Question was only given on Saturday, and he had not yet been able to obtain any information on the subject.

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION IN BOARD SCHOOLS.

Sir BERNHARD SAMUELSON (Oxfordshire, Banbury) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council, Whether his attention has been called to the fact that, in one of the Board Schools of London (the Beethoven Street School), where workshop instruction is given to boys in the Seventh Standard during a certain portion of the regular School hours, the time so occupied is not allowed to count in the register of attendance, thereby causing a reduction of the grant for average attendance; and, whether, pending the consideration which he has promised to give to a grant for technical instruction of this kind by the Science and Art Department, he will at any rate give directions that it shall not cause a reduction in the income of this and similar Schools?

The VICE PRESIDENT (Sir Lyon Playfair) (Leeds, S.): The rule applied in the Beethoven Street School is according to the Code, inasmuch as workshop instruction does not fall within the subjects for which grants can be made according to Articles 15, 16, 17; and I am not empowered under the Code to authorize any grant to be paid in respect of attendance at workshop instruction.

NAVY—H.M.S. "COLLINGWOOD"—BURSTING OF A GUN.

Mr. SEAGER HUNT (Marylebone, W.) asked the Surveyor General of Ordnance, Whether, in consequence of the uneasiness created in the public mind by the bursting of the gun on board H.M.S. *Collingwood*, Her Majesty's Government will grant a Royal Commission to inquire into and Report upon the design and construction of our modern ordnance?

The SURVEYOR GENERAL of ORDNANCE (Mr. Woodall) (Hanley): I must refer the hon. Gentleman to the replies already made by the Secretary of State for War and by myself, specifying the Ordnance Committee with associated members as the tribunal to which had been referred the causes of the recent failure of a 43-ton gun. Until the Report of that Committee shall be received no other action can be taken.

NAVY—H.M.S. "CALYPSO."

Captain VERNEY (Bucks, N., Buckingham) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Whether his attention has been drawn to the circumstances under which H.M.S. *Calypso* broke down during the late cruise of the training squadron; and, whether, as stated in the newspapers, the vessel was imperfectly caulked, and her keel was only singly plated; and, if so, who is held responsible for these defects?

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Hibbert) (Oldham): In reply to my hon. and gallant Friend, I have to say that the breakdown in the machinery of the *Calypso* was confined to the feathering gear of the screw propeller. The feathering lever of one of the blades broke when the ship was in the West Indies, and afterwards the connecting link of the same blade broke on the voyage home. The cause of these breakages has not yet been clearly ascertained, and the case is still under investigation. At the present moment a searching inquiry is being made.

CATTLE MARKETS—WEIGHING MACHINES.

MR. SETON-KARR (St. Helens) asked the President of the Board of Trade, Whether it is the fact that whereas general markets are compelled by law to provide proper weighing places for articles sold, no such weighing places are provided in cattle markets, and that consequently the weight of live cattle sold cannot be accurately ascertained, and is only arrived at by guess; and, whether Her Majesty's Government will take the necessary steps to remedy this defect, and enforce the provision in cattle markets of the necessary weighing machines?

MR. C. T. D. ACLAND (The SECRETARY to the BOARD) (Cornwall, Launceston): I am not aware that, up to the present time, any general demand has been felt, or at any rate expressed, for the provision of weighing houses, weighbridges, or machines for weighing live cattle, although by law provision is made by Local Authorities or Undertakers who regulate markets for weighing articles and commodities sold therein. It does not, however, rest with Her Majesty's Government to enforce the provision of necessary weighing machines for live stock as distinguished from dead meat. Representations should, therefore, be made to the Local Authorities where the means required are not forthcoming. There can be little doubt that the purchase of live stock by weight should be encouraged wherever the locality may be prepared to provide the cost of machines for the purpose.

REGISTRATION OF VOTERS—EXPENSES OF THE FRANCHISE.

MR. LEAHY (Kildare, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he has received a Resolution passed unanimously by the Athy Board of Guardians, and if the Government will consider the great hardship of putting the expense of administering the Franchise Acts upon the rates, and of the requisition forms which they deliver in respect of the Household Franchise, which are returned through the Post Office, in most instances with the postage unpaid, thereby involving payment of double postage at the cost of the union, and making an estimated addition of £7,000 from all Ireland; and, whether he will take some action to remedy it by legislation or otherwise?

MR. P. J. O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.) asked whether a similar resolution was passed by the Nenagh Board of Guardians?

MR. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, North) asked whether a similar resolution was passed by the Sligo Board of Guardians?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Not only those Boards mentioned, but other Boards throughout Ireland, have passed resolutions of which mention has been made in favour of the cost of the administration of the Registration Acts being made an Imperial instead of a local charge, and also in favour of free postage of the registration forms relating to household suffrage. The latter question is at present before the Law Officers of the Crown in England. As regards the former, I can only repeat what I said on a former occasion, that the matter is one for the Treasury, and obviously concerns England and Scotland as much as Ireland.

THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BILL DEBATE.

MR. RICHARD (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Prime Minister the following Question, of which I have given him private Notice:—Whether his attention has been called to a statement made by the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) on Saturday, and reported in the public press, as to the alleged pressure which is being placed on Members by the Party associations to vote for the second reading of the Government of Ireland Bill, and for which purpose the debate was to be indefinitely prolonged; and also to the letter signed by the hon.

Baronet the Member for the City of London (Sir Robert Fowler), and published in this morning's *Standard*, as to the tactics which are being pursued by the Government to prolong the debate; if so, is he prepared to urge upon the supporters of the Bill who are desirous of being heard to waive their right of speaking?

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I wish to ask the Prime Minister the following Question, of which I have given him private Notice. Has the right hon. Gentleman received it?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I have not received it.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: Then I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman the following Question, of which I have given him private Notice:—Whether, with the view of enabling the House to come to an early decision on the second reading of the Government of Ireland Bill by having the case fully and fairly before it, the Prime Minister will use his influence in the proper quarters to secure for the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) the earliest opportunity of laying before the House his alternative proposals, and thus enable the right hon. Gentleman to carry out his purpose of assisting the Government and the House in arriving at a speedy conclusion of the debate?

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I have no doubt that my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham will have ample means, when the proper time in his judgment arrives, of taking part in the debate and of securing that his fair claim to be heard shall meet with due attention. With regard to the Question put by my hon. Friend behind me (Mr. Richard), I think I had better, in answer to it, make the reply which I undertook on Friday last to make to the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach). The right hon. Gentleman asked me, in a manner which I thought perfectly usual and perfectly regular, as to the probable duration of this debate. I undertook, especially after hearing my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), to make inquiries on the subject, and to put myself in a condition, so far as possible, to form some judgment on the matter. In consequence of that, I requested my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Arnold Morley) to make inquiries in different parts of the House. I was waiting for the results of those inquiries when I saw published in the newspapers yesterday a statement attributed to my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale, whether accurately or not I do not know. He is made to assert that pressure, of which I do not myself know anything, was being exercised by Party Associations upon Members, and with the view of facilitating the exercise of this pressure it had been determined—it was not said by the Government; I do not take it to apply to the Government, but to some person or persons unknown, as they sometimes say at a Coroner's inquest—that the debate should be indefinitely prolonged. Again, Sir, this morning I read the remarkable letter of the hon. Member for the City of London (Sir Robert Fowler), which concludes in this way—

> "To those who recollect the practice of the House"—

I do not know by what authority he says this, as he is by no means the oldest Member—

> "the fact that Lord Kilcoursie was directed to speak emphatically shows the determination of Mr. Gladstone to postpone the fate of his Bills till the latest moment."

I confess I read that letter with some surprise, as I had always considered the hon. Baronet, who is as wide as the poles asunder from me in political opinion, to be eminently a courteous and good-natured man. It is not, however, the language of a courteous or good-natured man to say that anyone had been directed to speak in this House. I read the statement attributed, I hope erroneously, to my noble Friend (the Marquess of Hartington) with much regret, for I felt it was impossible for me to do any good by bringing any influence to bear on those who were placed under the stigma of artificially prolonging this debate. As this personal attack has been made upon my noble Friend (Viscount Kilcoursie), I must ask the leave of the House to state what actually happened. Before the debate began I encouraged my noble Friend, who spoke to me, to address the House on the question. Was there anything in that? The Liberal Party have been turned entirely out of the Irish representation, and Irish Liberals are ver rare among us, and rather precious, and considering that my noble Friend belongs to a family which for nearly three centuries has been connected with Ireland, I did not expect that his intervention in this debate would have been made the subject of invidious remark. Well, Sir, I very much regret that letter and what else has happened, because I felt that it disabled me from being of use in the matter to which the right hon. Gentleman had referred. I must thank my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham for fulfilling his part of the engagement in assisting me, because he wrote to me on Saturday morning very kindly to say he thought that some Members of Parliament with whom he had been in communication were of the same mind as those referred to by my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale. I have the satisfaction of saying, on the part of the Political Secretary, that I find from communications that I did not misinform the House on the former occasion. Perhaps some change of view may have taken place in the interval; but what my hon. Friend reported to me was perfectly accurate as to the insufficient means that Gentlemen sympathizing with my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham and the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale had up to that time enjoyed for taking part in the debate. What I find really is this—I can do nothing but state my own opinion. In the first place, I very earnestly hope that the Orders which we have been obliged to put down to-day in priority to the Irish Government Bill may be as rapidly disposed of as the exigencies of Business will permit, because I can assure Gentlemen, for those who have great responsibility in this matter, that the indefinite prolongation of debates of this kind is a great addition to the burden of public affairs, with all the uncertainties that attend them. Nothing I should regret so much as the interposition of any artificial obstacle to the closing of the debate. I hope that in any case we shall get through the Committee on the Arms Bill to-night. I also venture to hope, notwithstanding the imputations thrown out by the hon. Alderman, if I may give any advice to Gentlemen in this House, that they will claim their own just liberty in proportion to what the importance of the subject demands, and that they will pay no heed to any unjust imputations of a scheme for indefinitely prolonging the debate in order to permit pressure to be put on Members. Above all, if I may make a recommendation, it is that they should carefully avoid retaliation. One of the greatest objections I have to imputations of this kind is that they are so exceedingly easy to retaliate, and I hope that all those who have any predisposition at all to listen to what I or the Government may say will carefully avoid any of that retaliation, though perhaps it may not be difficult to make. I only refer to the letter of the hon. Alderman and Baronet on this ground, that at the time when he makes this charge, which he does not throw out as a matter of suspicion or probability, but as a thing demonstrated beyond doubt, I thought it was well to look to the statistics of the debate. On examining those statistics I found that the speakers for the Bill at the moment when this charge was made were 23, and against the Bill 24. I stated at the beginning of this debate that we must see what had taken place on former occasions, not only on account of the vast importance of the subject, but the large volume of the propositions contained in the Bill. I thought that it might be difficult perhaps to say that this debate could not be reasonably prolonged, at any rate within the limits for which there were precedents on former occasions. I had a recollection of a precedent on a former occasion, although I frankly own I hope it may not be necessary to follow it in full, but it is a precedent that will be greatly respected on the opposite side of the House, because it was made by a body of Gentlemen for whom they must cherish the tenderest respect, inasmuch as they were the Gentlemen from whom the present Conservative Party springs. It was made by the Protectionist Party in opposing Sir Robert Peel in 1846. The Motion for the repeal of the Corn Laws was made by Sir Robert Peel on February 9, and the vote of the House was taken on February 26, the debate having extended in the meantime over 12 nights. I hope it will not be necessary to extend the debate on the Government of Ireland Bill so much; but I am sorry to say I am afraid, under existing circumstances, I cannot do more than express my own feeling and the very earnest hope that no Gentleman will give any real colour to the charge which the hon. Alderman and Baronet has made.

Sir MICHAEL HICKS - BEACH (Bristol, W.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in regard to the precedent he has quoted, his attention has been called to what I believe was the fact—that that debate was prolonged, not, as in the present case it would seem to be, by those who support the Bill, but by those who were in opposition to the measure? I would further call the right hon. Gentleman's attention to the fact that in the very interesting statement he has made, he has given no answer whatever to the question which he stated he was going to answer to-night—namely, whether he can give us any idea of the date of the probable termination of this debate.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: My attention was called to the fact that the prolongation of the debate on the repeal of the Corn Laws was mainly due to the Opposition. I cannot, however, draw any distinction between the right of the supporters of a Bill and the right of its opponents to take part in the discussion. I did not answer literally the Question of the right hon. Gentleman, as I had hoped to be in a condition to answer. I proposed to do it in an indirect manner by stating that what had really occurred incapacitated me from going so far as I should otherwise have done in the way of ascertaining what number of Members might be disposed to waive their right of addressing the House. I do not feel myself capable, on the part of Her Majesty's Government, to agree to anything of that sort after what has occurred. I cannot attempt to state any day on which the debate will be concluded.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON (Lancashire, Rossendale): I hope the House will allow me to say one or two words in the nature of a personal explanation. The hon. Member for Merthyr Tydvil (Mr. Richard) has not given me any Notice that he was going to put a Question to the Prime Minister turning on something which I am supposed to have stated at a meeting on Saturday, which was not a public meeting, and at which reporters were not present, and of which I have not seen any report which professes to be full or authentic. I think it would have been more in accordance with the usual custom of the House if the hon. Member had told me that he intended to found a Question upon some report which had appeared of those proceedings. I am quite sure it would have been a more convenient course, because I should have been in a position either to admit the accuracy of the report from which the hon. Member has quoted, or to state in what respect I did not think it was accurate. The hon. Member in his Question only made an indirect reference to what I am supposed to have said. All I can say is that I am not prepared, without seeing the report on which the hon. Member founded his Question, to admit the accuracy of the quotation to which he apparently refers. No doubt, I may have referred to the information given to me that pressure was being brought to bear by some local Associations upon Members in order to induce them to vote for the second reading of the Bill, and I may also have referred to what appeared to me to be the probability of an indefinite prolongation of the discussion. But I do not admit—and until I see the actual report of my speech upon which the statement is founded I cannot admit —that I placed the two things together in a manner which the Prime Minister would have reason to complain of.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

Supply—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

(1.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a further sum, not exceeding £2,266,400, be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charge for the following Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March 1887, viz:—

CIVIL SERVICES.

Class I.—Public Works and Buildings.

	£
Great Britain:—	
New Admiralty and War Office ..	- -
Dover Harbour	- -
Ireland:—	
Royal University Buildings	2,000
Science and Art Buildings, Dublin ..	2,000

CLASS II.—SALARIES AND EXPENSES OF CIVIL DEPARTMENTS.

England :—	£
House of Lords, Offices	3,000
House of Commons, Offices	4,000
Treasury, including Parliamentary Counsel	5,000
Home Office and Subordinate Departments	10,000
Foreign Office	5,000
Colonial Office	5,000
Privy Council Office and Subordinate Departments	4,000
Board of Trade and Subordinate Departments	10,000
Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade	- -
Charity Commission (including Endowed Schools Department)	3,500
Civil Service Commission	3,000
Exchequer and Audit Department	6,000
Friendly Societies, Registry	1,000
Land Commission for England	2,000
Local Government Board	30,000
Lunacy Commission	1,000
Mint (including Coinage)	5,000
National Debt Office	2,000
Patent Office	4,000
Paymaster General's Office	2,000
Public Works Loan Commission	800
Record Office	2,000
Registrar General's Office	3,000
Stationery Office and Printing	40,000
Woods, Forests, &c. Office of	3,000
Works and Public Buildings, Office of	5,000
Mercantile Marine Fund, Grant in Aid	5,000
Secret Service	5,000
Scotland :—	
Secretary for Scotland	1,000
Exchequer and other Offices	1,200
Fishery Board	2,500
Lunacy Commission	500
Registrar General's Office	500
Board of Supervision	1,000
Ireland :—	
Lord Lieutenant's Household	1,000
Chief Secretary's Office	4,500
Charitable Donations and Bequests Office	200
Local Government Board	10,000
Public Works Office	7,000
Record Office	1,000
Registrar General's Office	2,000
Valuation and Boundary Survey	3,000

CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE.

Ireland :—	
Law Charges and Criminal Prosecutions	5,000
Supreme Court of Judicature	7,000
Registry of Deeds	1,500
Registry of Judgments	300
Land Commission	6,000
County Court Officers, &c.	10,000
Dublin Metropolitan Police (including Police Courts)	20,000
Constabulary	125,000
Prisons, Ireland	15,000

CLASS IV.—EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND ART.

England :—	£
Public Education	500,000
Science and Art Department	50,000
British Museum	20,000
National Gallery	1,000
National Portrait Gallery	- -
Learned Societies, &c.	2,500
London University	1,000
University Colleges, Wales	4,000
Deep Sea Exploring Expedition (Report)	- -
Scotland :—	
Public Education	60,000
Universities, &c.	3,000
National Gallery	200
Ireland :—	
Public Education	160,000
Teachers' Pension Office	100
Endowed Schools Commissioners	- -
National Gallery	300
Queen's Colleges	- -
Royal Irish Academy	1,200

CLASS V.—FOREIGN AND COLONIAL SERVICES.

Diplomatic Services	10,000
Consular Services	10,000
Slave Trade Services	3,000
Suez Canal (British Directors)	- -
Colonies, Grants in Aid	3,000
South Africa and St. Helena	10,000
Subsidies to Telegraph Companies	5,000
Cyprus, Grant in Aid	- -

CLASS VI.—NON-EFFECTIVE AND CHARITABLE SERVICES.

Superannuation and Retired Allowances	20,000
Merchant Seamen's Fund Pensions, &c.	6,000
Pauper Lunatics, England	- -
Pauper Lunatics, Scotland	20,000
Pauper Lunatics, Ireland	25,000
Hospitals and Infirmaries, Ireland	- -
Savings Banks and Friendly Societies Deficiency	- -
Miscellaneous Charitable and other Allowances, Great Britain	500
Miscellaneous Charitable and other Allowances, Ireland	100

CLASS VII.—MISCELLANEOUS.

Temporary Commissions	2,000
Miscellaneous Expenses	- -
Total for Civil Services	£1,316,400

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

Customs	50,000
Inland Revenue	100,000

	£
Post Office	500,000
Post Office Packet Service	180,000
Post Office Telegraphs	120,000
Total for Revenue Departments	£950,000
Grand Total	£2,266,400

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine) said, there was an item in blank in Class I. for Dover Harbour. He wished to have an explanation. He believed that it was distinctly understood from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that no further sum in connection with Dover Harbour would be brought forward until the plans and estimates for the proposed works were submitted to the House.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.) said, it was not proposed to take any further sum for Dover Harbour, and the hon. and gallant Gentleman would see that the item was left in blank.

MR. RYLANDS (Burnley): I desire, Mr. Courtney, to ask your direction in reference to this Vote on Account. The total sum of £2,266,400 contains a very large number of items, and I want to know what course must be taken by any Member who wishes to move the reduction of the Vote in reference to one particular item only?

THE CHAIRMAN: As far as possible it would be advisable to restrict the discussion to the items in the order in which they appear upon the Paper. If an Amendment is moved in reference to one item it would be out of Order to go back to previous items.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): For the convenience of the Committee, may I ask how you propose to put the Question—whether on the whole sum, or on the different items taken in the order in which they appear upon the Paper, so that an opportunity may be afforded of moving a reduction on every item? I take it that if the whole sum is put to the Committee only one Amendment can be moved.

THE CHAIRMAN: If a Motion is made to reduce the whole sum that would not include subsequent Amendments for the reduction of particular items. But if the Motion is made to omit a particular item, or to reduce it, then it will be irregular to go back to any previous item.

MR. RYLANDS (Burnley): I wish to move the reduction of a special item —namely, Vote 28, in Class II. The amount of the item is £5,000 for Secret Service. I propose to move the omission of that item altogether, and I presume that I shall be quite in Order in doing so. I put a Question with regard to this Secret Service money the other day, having some knowledge of what goes on before the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Public Accounts Committee, and I am bound to say that although my hon. Friend gave me information which was no doubt correct, at the same time it was not complete, and it left hon. Members without full information as to the exact circumstances in which we are placed in regard to Secret Service money. My hon. Friend did not tell the House that any sum had been surrendered out of the £10,000 charged on the Consolidated Fund. The Vote we are now asked to pass is for Secret Services of a similar nature to those provided for out of the Consolidated Fund. Under the present arrangement it is quite possible for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury to receive £10,000 a-year for five years for Secret Service, and allow the money to accumulate until it amounts to £50,000. Hon. Members have a right to know that Secret Service money is not prostituted for purposes which would be repugnant to the feeling of the House of Commons. We know that in other years Secret Service money has been applied to purposes which the House of Commons would condemn at the present time, and it has been pointed out that this money has been made use of for purposes to which a large portion of the people would object. What I desire to call the attention of the Committee to is the fact that the House of Commons has no guarantee whatever that the employment of Secret Service money is restricted to such objects as, to use the words of the Treasury Minute, are justified under the conditions on which Secret Service exists. The Comptroller and Auditor General is an officer appointed not by the Government, but by Parliament under an Act of Parliament, and the object of his appointment is to secure that the money we vote in Committee of Supply shall be carefully and strictly appropriated to the purposes for which the House of Commons votes it. We are here as the trustees of the public taxpayer. We are asked to vote a sum of money for a certain purpose, and with regard to every other purpose except the Vote for Secret Service, the House of Commons has in its hands the power of checking any maladministration in the expenditure of the country by any Member of Her Majesty's Government. But, with regard to Secret Service, the House of Commons has no such control. The Government are practically omnipotent, and they can devote £10,000 or £50,000 to purposes about which we know nothing, and some of them may exercise a corrupt influence in controlling public opinion. I know what has always been said in reply to any opposition that has been raised to this Vote. Secret Service money has been voted for many years, and every objection has been met by an answer which I presume I shall receive from my hon. Friend to-day—that it is an official matter, and that being for Secret Service, the House of Commons has no right to inquire about it. All we have a right to ask is whether the money has been expended. Some years ago I was able to ascertain, by dint of persistent inquiry and examination, that out of Secret Service money unknown to Parliament, very considerable sums were paid as salaries to certain public officials, which salaries ought to have been paid from the Estimates. I put Question after Question to the Government, and received evasive answers, until at last I succeeded in getting such information that the Government were compelled to avow they had used Secret Service money for purposes entirely contrary to the understanding with which it was voted. I have referred to the Comptroller and Auditor General. He is a perfectly confidential officer of this House, and what we have a right to insist upon is this—that there shall be such evidence given to the Comptroller and Auditor General as will enable him to report to the House that the expenditure in Secret Service is of a character that is justified by the conditions under which Secret Service is voted. The Government and the Treasury refuse to do that. They say—"We will give the Comptroller and Auditor General no such information as will enable him to satisfy the House of Commons as to the *bona fides* of this expenditure." It is no answer to my contention to say that Secret Service money is for Secret Services, and that the way in which it is expended is only to be within the knowledge of the Minister in charge of it, because we do not desire to make the purposes for which Secret Service money is expended public; but we say that we have a public official—a perfectly confidential officer—by whom information given by the different Departments of the State would be treated with the greatest possible confidence. All we ask is, that by means of this confidential official of the House of Commons, we should have a certificate before we vote the money, not only that it has been properly applied, but that any portion of it which has not been expended has been surrendered to the Exchequer. That course is taken in regard to every other sum of money voted by the House of Commons, and the Comptroller and Auditor General believes that he is bound by law to give such a certificate. In his opinion, the Act of Parliament gives him this authority by which Parliament reserves to itself the important duty of checking through its own official the proper appropriation of money expended out of the taxes of the country. The Comptroller and Auditor General, representing this House, says that he is bound and entitled, under the terms of the Act of Parliament, to have submitted to him such vouchers in regard to this Secret Service money as will satisfy him, and he asks that the information should be given to him, confidentially, of course. He makes that request as the mouthpiece of the House of Commons; but my Lords of the Treasury object. "My Lords." Who are my Lords that they should refuse the demands of the House of Commons? Surely we have a right to ascertain through our own officials whether the money we vote is properly applied or not. We suspect that it is not properly applied. We challenge the Government, and say that we believe the Secret Service money is not applied at all times, and under all circumstances, to the objects to which alone it can be legally applied. The present state of things is altogether unsatisfactory. Therefore, I challenge this £5,000, and I trust the Committee will join me in voting for the rejection of the Vote. There are other Members of the House who, like myself, are Members of the Public Accounts Committee, and they well know that I have only expressed in this matter the feeling of that Committee. I beg to move that the item of £5,000 for Secret Service be omitted from the Vote.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Item of £5,000, for Secret Service, be omitted from the proposed Vote."—(*Mr. Rylands.*)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby): I do not rise to speak upon this question in virtue of the Office I now hold, because, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, I have no knowledge whatever of the way in which the Secret Service money is disposed of. Neither do I speak at all in reference to the £10,000 charged upon the Consolidated Fund, which is a separate head of Secret Service altogether, and stands under Mr. Burke's Act of 1782. By that great Act, as it has been described, of economical reform, that sum is thrown upon the Consolidated Fund, and is on a totally different footing. In neither of the Offices which I have held have I known anything of the disposal of that money; but having previously held the Office of Secretary to the Home Department, I have some knowledge of the disposal of the Secret Service money, which is the matter now under consideration. All I have to say to my hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands) is this—There are only two courses really open to Members—they must either do away with Secret Service money altogether, or vote it as it has hitherto been voted. To vote Secret Service money, and then to declare that you must be told how it is spent, is simply an absurdity, whether the information is to be supplied to the Committee on Public Accounts, or to any other body. I must say in respect of the Office I previously held, that I have refused to give any authority whatever to make any statement with reference to the disposal of this money. It was voted by Parliament as Secret Service money; it was voted to be spent by the Secretary of State on his Parliamentary responsibility, and if the House of Commons does not trust the Secretary of State as to the disposal of the money, the best course is not to vote it. It would be absurd to vote it on conditions which would make its application useless and impossible. That is really the situation. The proper course for my hon. Friend to take is to declare that the House will not in future vote Secret Service money. That is a logical course to take. All I can tell the House is that I do not think it would be wise or a safe course; if, however, I were to attempt to give any reason for that opinion, I should be violating the rule which I have laid down. All that I can say is that during the time I had the responsibility of the Home Office, I considered it absolutely essential that there should be placed at the disposal of the Secretary of State a sum—not a large sum—of Secret Service money for the purposes stated in the Act of 1782, and I have no hesitation in making a conscientious declaration that I spent that money for the public safety. Not only was that so, but it was my duty to come to the House and ask for a much larger sum of money than had been voted in previous years. In my opinion there were reasons why a larger sum of money should be voted, and the House cheerfully granted it without the slightest opposition. I believe this year that the same sum of money is asked for which was asked for two or three years ago. That is all I think I can safely or properly say to the Committee upon the subject. You must, in my opinion, in this country, place at the disposal of your responsible Ministers sums of money of this description, and you must leave to them the absolute and unquestioned responsibility of dealing with that money. You must not attempt to treat it like any other expenditure which is subjected to statements showing the exact way in which it is disposed of. If you were to adopt that course in regard to Secret Service money, you would entirely defeat the object for which it is to be employed. There is one point in reference to this matter upon which I should like to say a word. I know that great objection is raised, and properly raised, to a practice which prevailed in former times of using Secret Service money in aid of and for the increase of ordinary salaries. I think that is a course which is entirely wrong, and ought not to be pursued. On the other hand, it is impossible to lay down a rule that Secret Service money shall not be employed or paid into the hands of persons who receive salaries for employment under the Crown. Anybody will see at once that agents of the Crown abroad, and even in this country, are proper persons to have Secret Service money in their hands for the objects for which Secret Service money is employed. I ask my hon. Friend to consider that there are only two courses open to Members—either to do away with Secret Service money altogether, or to vote it as it has hitherto been voted.

Mr. RYLANDS: All I ask is that it should be submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General, who is a confidential officer of this House.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: My contention is that the Secretary of State must tell no one how the money is employed, and if the Home Secretary refuses to go before the Committee of Public Accounts, and prove to them that the money has been properly employed, how could you ask him to take a subordinate into his confidence? Certainly if such a condition were imposed, if ever I were Secretary of State again, I should decline to have anything to do with Secret Service money. I would not accept the heavy responsibility which is placed upon the Minister if it were subjected to conditions of that kind. The very essence of the employment of Secret Service money is that it shall be applied on the sole unquestioned and undivided responsibility of the Secretary of State. If the House will not grant it at all on those conditions, it is open to hon. Members to refuse to do so; but to ask the Secretary of State to go to the Comptroller and Auditor General upon some grave matter of public danger, and to say—"Do you think the Secret Service money would be properly applied?"—if such a course were taken the purpose for which Secret Service money has hitherto been granted would be altogether defeated. The Secretary of State employs Secret Service money for the safety of the State; and in what a position would he be placed by having it disallowed by the Comptroller and Auditor General? Do you suppose that any Secretary of State would consent to act on such a principle of responsibility in this matter? On this question I am not raising at all the question which has been raised by my hon. Friend behind me the Member for the Tyneside Division of Northumberland (Mr. A. Grey) as to the sum of £10,000 charged for Secret Services upon the Consolidated Fund. I never heard, and know nothing whatever of, the disposal of that money. So far as I know, the Secret Service money has never been used for political purposes. I say that with the greatest confidence, and I am certain that there is no Secretary of State who ever held the Office who will not say the same thing in reference to the employment of Secret Service money. [Sir R. Assheton Cross: Hear, hear!] What I am speaking of is the sum over which the Secretary of State has had absolute control, and which has been placed at his disposal by Parliament for Secret Service. I have told the House frankly and clearly how the matter stands, as far as I know anything in reference to it, and the advice I would give to the Committee is either to refuse this Vote of Secret Service money which goes to the Secretary of State, or grant it in the usual manner. To subject it to conditions such as those which have been laid down by my hon. Friend would render a Vote of this kind totally useless.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): The moral indignation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is merely an attempt to draw a red herring across the scent. The point is an exceedingly simple one—£10,000 are taken from the Consolidated Fund every year for Secret Service money. It is assumed that when that money is taken that it is spent for the service of the country, and not for the service of Party. I presume that the only reason why more is asked for is that £10,000 is supposed to be not sufficient for the Secret Service of the country. What we want to have is a clear answer to the question which was put to the Government by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Tyneside Division of Northumberland (Mr. A. Grey)—namely, how is the sum of £10,000 spent? We want to be assured that the money is properly spent. It ought not to be necessary to call upon the House for more. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bristol (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) will be able to explain. He was Chancellor of the Exchequer when this sum was last appropriated, and will probably be able to explain what took place when he filled that Office. The allegation is that £2,500 each quarter is given into the hands of the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury; that it may be the Patronage Secretary expends this sum per quarter in electioneering or other such purposes during that quarter; that if he does not he passes the surplus into what is generally called the Party Fund, and then he has had a right to say that it has been expended during the quarter. Now, we want to know whether such is or is not the fact? [Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT dissented.] The Chancellor of the Exchequer shakes his head.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must point out to the hon. Member that this is a sum paid every year out of the Consolidated Fund, and that it does not come under the discussion of this Vote at all.

MR. LABOUCHERE: No, Mr. Courtney, I did not think it did; but I am protesting against the payment of this £5,000, because I am pointing out that the money from the Consolidated Fund would be sufficient if it were properly spent. That really is the practical point. I think it will be admitted that when £10,000 are given out of the Consolidated Fund, and we are then asked to vote £5,000 in addition, we have a right to consider whether the sum of £10,000 per annum is sufficient. What we say is that the Secret Service money might be reduced by the sum granted out of the Consolidated Fund. Money voted for Secret Service ought not to be expended for Party purposes. We know that it has been done for years, and we are not making charges against the present Ministry which are not equally applicable to previous Ministries. But in a Reformed Parliament like this it is peculiarly fitting that the question should be raised in order that the objectionable practice complained of should be stopped. As the Chancellor of the Exchequer is not prepared to make a clean breast of it, I would appeal to the late Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) to say whether what I assert is not absolutely correct?

MR. ALBERT GREY (Northumberland, Tyneside): I hope the Committee will not allow the question to be settled without going to a division. The right hon. Gentleman described Mr. Burke's celebrated Act of 1782 as a great work of economical reform. Why was that Act a great work of economical reform? It was for this reason—that whereas between 1700 and 1782 large sums were annually intrusted to the Government of the day for Secret Service, no account was ever given of the way in which those moneys were spent. So great did the abuse become that in 1782 Parliament, being jealous as to the way in which a sum of £2,000,000, of which no account had been given, had been spent, passed the Civil List Act, which required that vouchers should be produced showing the way in which the moneys of all the Services had been spent. On the accession of Her Majesty to the Throne all the moneys granted for the Secret Service were transferred from the Civil List to Votes of this House, with the exception of £10,000, which was left as a permanent charge on the Consolidated Fund. We want to know the reason why an exception was made in favour of this £10,000? No one has yet been able to discover anything about the reason why the application of this sum of £10,000 should be kept concealed from the House of Commons, and why the attention of Members is not to be turned to investigations as to how and for what purposes the money is employed. I did not quite understand, from the Treasury Minute which my hon. Friend read to the Committee at Question time, what are exactly the declarations made when the Head of a Department uses Secret Service money. In regard to all of the money granted by Votes of this House, and received by every Minister, and which may be properly termed Secret Service money, he has to make some declaration to the Comptroller and Auditor General that he has used such and such a sum for such and such a purpose. The Comptroller and Auditor General has also a right to call for vouchers, and if there is a balance at the end of the year, that balance is restored to the Exchequer. With regard to the sum of £10,000 taken from the Consolidated Fund, none of these conditions are ever fulfilled. Although £10,000 is taken annually and paid over to the Patronage Secretary, not a single 1*s*. has ever been surrendered. It is a very striking thing, that although the other Departments of the State—the Home Office, the Foreign Office, and the Irish Office—have to surrender their respective balances at the end of the year if they have not used the whole of the money, yet the Political Secretary has never been known since the accession of the Queen to surrender a single 1*s*., but has been known to pocket year after year £10,000 of the public funds. In this way over £450,000 has been spent by successive Political Secretaries without a word of account being given to the Comptroller and Auditor General, as in the case of the other branches of the Public Service. We maintain that it is essential that the same rules which secure other grants of Secret Service money being employed in the legitimate service of the State should also be observed in the disposal of this sum of £10,000.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: That is the effect of the Treasury Minute.

Mr. ALBERT GREY: I did not quite understand that that was so, and I shall be glad if my right hon. Friend will give some further explanation and assurance to the Committee.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: If my hon. Friend asks me what the effect of the Treasury Minute is, I have only to say that it amounts to this—that whatever rules are applied to the voting of Secret Service shall in future be applied to the granting of this sum of £10,000 from the Consolidated Fund. That is the spirit of the Minute agreed to by the late Government.

Mr. ALBERT GREY: I am glad that the Question I put on the Notice Paper has been instrumental in bringing about that alteration.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: No, it has not; it was made months ago.

Mr. ALBERT GREY: Then I cannot claim any credit for helping to spur on the energy of the right hon. Gentleman. We now know that it was a spontaneous act on his part.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: No; the late Government did it.

Mr. ALBERT GREY: I should be glad to learn what was the old form of declaration which the Head of the Department had to make to the Comptroller and Auditor General, and what is the new form of declaration, so that we may say whether we prefer the words of the declaration which the Government propose to substitute for that which previously existed? I am sorry that I have not by me the exact words of the old declaration.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: They will be found in the Act of 1782.

Mr. ALBERT GREY: I hope my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury will elucidate the point. There is a further question which I desire to put. Why is it that this Secret Service money should be divided into two classes? It appears that the greater portion of the sum of £60,000 granted this year—namely £50,000—is granted by Votes of this House, but that the remaining sum of £10,000 is drawn from the Consolidated Fund. Why should you not perfect the reform instituted in 1837, on Her Majesty's accession to the Throne, and require that every single 1*d.* granted for the Secret Service of the State every year should be voted directly by this House, and not be a permanent and a secret charge upon the Consolidated Fund? My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer says that not 1*d.* of this fund has ever been applied for Party or electioneering purposes.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: What I said with regard to this sum of £10,000 was that I cannot tell how it is applied, because I know nothing whatever about it.

Mr. ALBERT GREY: But I think the Committee wants to know something about it, and I shall certainly support the proposal of my hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands). I would ask the Government how it is that my hon. Friend the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury is not in his place? Is he engaged on some Secret Service? I think he ought to have been informed by one of the junior Whips that this debate was going on, so that he might have been in his place to answer any question that might be put to him. I think that a very strong case has been made out for getting rid altogether of the charge upon the Consolidated Fund. No explanation has as yet been given to show that the £10,000 now charged upon the Consolidated Fund is necessary for the annual requirements of Secret Service. Therefore, let it be thrown upon the Votes of the House; and if no further explanation can be given, I shall certainly support the Motion of my hon. Friend for the rejection of the present Vote.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): There are one or two points to which I should like to call the attention of the Committee before we go to a division. As I understand what the Chancellor of the Exchequer said just now, the Treasury Minute which has lately been issued does apply to the assimilation of the various branches of Secret Service money, so that in future any unexpended balance of the £10,000 is to be surrendered to the Treasury. As I did not catch perfectly what the right hon. Gentleman said, I should be glad to know if that is so? At present it forms one great point of distinction between the £10,000 granted out of the Consolidated Fund and the money ordinarily voted for Secret Service. The unexpected balances of the £10,000 are not paid back into the Exchequer; but the Committee upon Public Accounts, in their Report last year, recommended that those unexpended balances should be annually surrendered. We want to know whether, in the new Treasury Minute, that recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee is going to be carried out? From the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer it may be that the recommendation is not going to be carried out after all. The Committee of Public Accounts made a further recommendation—namely, that an account of the actual expenditure should be furnished to the Comptroller and Auditor General, and I gather from what fell earlier in the evening from the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) that this is provided for by the Treasury Minute, so that as far as we can find out these two recommendations are going to be carried out in regard to the Secret Service money thrown on the Consolidated Fund. Then there is another point of distinction, if I may be permitted to trouble the Committee a little longer, between the sum for Secret Service which is granted out of the Consolidated Fund and the sum voted in connection with the Estimates of the year. It is this. There is a specific instruction in the Act of 1782 in regard to the purposes for which Secret Service money is to be devoted.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: That is only as to the actual sum voted.

MR. BUCHANAN: I know that it only applies to the sum voted, and that there is no specific instruction as to the purposes for which the sums voted are to be applied. Nor are there any specific instructions to the Comptroller and Auditor General as to the purposes for which this sum of £10,000 shall be applied. It is a distinguishing feature of the money granted from the Consolidated Fund, as compared with that voted in Committee of Supply, that there are no directions existing in any public document as to the purposes to which it shall be applied. It appears to me that it would be of great advantage if there were some such instructions. There is one other point. If I understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer rightly, he disclaims in every way any connection with the Comptroller and Auditor General. He can repose no confidence in that officer as to the disposal of Secret Service money. The Comptroller and Auditor General, in the evidence which he gave to the Committee on Public Accounts this year, was asked what course he would take if the application of Secret Service money was made known to him, and he replied at once that he should feel bound by his sense of honour, and that he should consider himself as much bound as the Secretary of State, to keep the matter perfectly confidential. He was asked—

> "The danger, then, of undermining the principle of Secret Service is therefore not so great as the right hon. Member seems to anticipate?"

And his reply was—

> "The Head of the Department ought to be a trustworthy man, holding, as he does, an office invested with a larger amount of trust than any other office I know of in the Public Service."

Now, it appears to me a perfectly futile objection on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that a man in the position of the Comptroller and Auditor General cannot be trusted. The right hon. Gentleman took some credit to himself, and some glory to the Government, for having largely increased the amount of Secret Service money. It is certainly a singular thing that a Liberal Government should take credit for having increased the Secret Service money, and I am perfectly certain of this—that whatever the right hon. Gentleman may think, the Prime Minister cannot agree with him, or he must very considerably have changed his mind about the employment of Secret Service money within the last 30 years. Some years ago the Prime Minister expressed a desire that this Secret Service Vote should be limited as much as possible; but the ambition of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was to extend it as much as possible. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman told us how much it has been extended. In 1880 the total was £15,891; in 1881-2 it was £14,000; in 1882-3, £18,000; in 1883-4, £31,000;

in 1884-5 it was £31,000 again, and for the last two years it was £50,000. [Sir William Harcourt: Hear, hear!] As the Vote increases the Chancellor of the Exchequer seems to be the more gratified. We have, therefore, at this moment this sum of money expended without any control whatever, and the money has been increased four times within the last four years. I think the Committee is entitled to make as strong a protest as it can against this constant increase of this Vote, and of the way in which these sums are disposed of without control, and without any attempt at economy having been carried out by the Government.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): I must take exception to the statement that this money is spent without control or without responsibility, and it is absurd to say that the money cannot be so spent unless it is subjected to the legitimate responsibility of the Comptroller and Auditor General. The hon. Member wishes to interpose behind the Cabinet as a sort of Court of Appeal the control of the Auditor General. The hon. Member is quite content that the House should not know, but he wishes to place this Court of Appeal behind the Cabinet. [Mr. Buchanan: It is so now.] There is a wide distinction between the two sums of money, although the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) endeavoured ingeniously to bring them together. The £10,000 has been upon the Consolidated Fund since 1782, and it can only be dealt with by the repeal of the Act of Parliament. I am not concerned to defend the expenditure in any shape or form. We simply find that £10,000 is spent for Secret Service, and the Treasury Minute proposes to extend to the patronage of the Secretary to the Treasury precisely the same conditions as are applied to the money placed at the disposal of the Secretary of State. He will have to certify how much has been paid to him, and how much has been spent during the year; thirdly, what the balance is which has been unspent; and, lastly, that the money expended has been spent in the manner contemplated by the Act of Parliament. I understand my hon. Friend the Member for the Tyneside Division of Northumberland (Mr. A. Grey) to say that he preferred the old form of certificate, which was to this effect—"I hereby certify that the actual sum of money spent by myself, or under my direction for Secret Service, was so much." The new form is to make it an actually binding statement on the part of the Secretary of State that he has spent the money in accordance with the provisions of the Act of Parliament, and that he has spent it for purposes for which a Vote of Parliament can be properly given. There is another point to which I should like to call the attention of the Committee. It is a mistake to suppose that the money is spent altogether without control. It is handed over either to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, for Home Affairs, for Colonial Affairs, to the First Lord of the Admiralty, or the Secretary of the Irish Government. But the Secretary of State to whom it is handed over is obliged to take an oath before one of the Judges, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer makes a declaration that it has been applied to Secret Services in detecting, defeating, and preventing conspiracies against the State. I want to know whether, if we are to adopt the principle of having Secret Service money at all, we can have any better check than the voucher of a Cabinet Minister in a declaration made on oath before one of Her Majesty's Judges? Surely that is a better check than the opinion of the Comptroller and Auditor General, who may differ from the Secretary of State as to the mode of expenditure. If you are to have Secret Service money at all—and I will not pronounce any opinion upon that question—I do not think you can have any better system of check than those which now exist, and for which the Government take no credit whatever. So far as the recent Treasury Minute is concerned, it was drawn up by the right hon. Gentleman opposite before he left Office.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): If the Motion for the reduction of the Vote goes to a division I shall certainly vote in favour of it, but not for any of the reasons which have been given by hon. Gentlemen who support the omission of the Vote. I shall vote for its rejection because I am opposed to Secret Service money altogether, and that is the principle on which I shall record my vote. I quite agree that when you call this money Secret Service money, by the terms of that description you preclude yourselves from any right of inquiring how it is applied. But I do not think that a great country like this ought to require the expenditure of money in regard to which it cannot take Parliament into its confidence.

Sir HENRY JAMES (Bury, Lancashire): I differ altogether from the view of the hon. Gentleman. I am as unwilling as he is to vote for the expenditure of money in Secret Services; but I am quite aware that it is necessary in order that the Public Business of the country may be carried on with efficiency. I have every confidence that the Ministers who now ask for this money have proper and sufficient grounds for making the demand; but I am certainly opposed to the application of the £10,000 to Parliamentary elections. I shall bear in mind your ruling, Mr. Courtney, that we are simply discussing the Vote of £5,000; but I think my hon. Friend is logically correct in showing that there is another sum of £10,000 used for the purposes of the Government in addition, and that, as a matter of fact, £60,000 are applied to Secret Services. I think, therefore, that the £10,000, although not actually before the Committee, ought not to be forgotten. The allegation has been made in the House that a large portion of this Secret Service money is expended in aid of elections. I hope that this is not the case, because it is desirable to obtain a free expression of opinion at every election without the expenditure of public money. It may be a democratic view, but, to my mind, it is a sound view, that in an election money should play as little a part as possible. The average expenditure at borough elections in these days is £500. If £10,000 of the Secret Service money were devoted at bye-elections to assist the Government candidates at 20 elections, such aid would obviously place the Government candidate in a position of superiority as against the democratic candidate. This is not a question as to the amount of money which passes through the hands of the Secretary of State, but as to the money which passes through the hands of a Gentleman who ought to be aware whether the allegation is or is not true, that it is devoted to election purposes. I would suggest that, public attention having been called to the matter, the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer should take the question into consideration. It is not a question of Party advantage to one side or the other. It applies to both Parties alike, and, seeing the changed opinion which now exists with respect to the conduct of elections, it should be determined whether this old custom should be allowed any longer to exist. I think we ought to have full confidence in the Government in the matter of Secret Service money, and I cannot support the Motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands); but I hope the Prime Minister will say that the matter will be brought under the attention of the Government, because I am sure it may be considered with advantage to the Public Service.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I desire to say a few words in order to explain why I do not feel inclined to vote for the Motion of the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands). It is a new experience to Irish Members on these Benches to witness this new-born zeal on the part of certain hon. Gentlemen opposite with regard to Secret Service money. If I thought this was an honest attack on Secret Service money I would be among the first men in the House to support it. I must confess that the speech of the right hon. and learned Gentleman who has just sat down filled me with astonishment. I marvel at the audacity of a right hon. and learned Member who can stand up and declare that he is shocked at the use to which this £10,000 is devoted—the use, apparently, having been only discovered by him yesterday, although the Committee know that he has been an influential and prominent Member of several Governments. This is a large draft on the credulity of hon. Members, and, to my mind, is nothing short of a farce. We have the Committee engaged in solemnly debating the abuse of public money which, if it is an abuse, has gone on unchallenged for many years. The practice of voting Secret Service money may be a bad practice, and if it were honestly attacked I should be glad to vote against it. I cannot believe, however, that the present attack is an honest one, and therefore I shall not vote. I know of no more sublime sight than to see the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands) denouncing the maladministration of public money, and advocating public economy; and I trust that he will not forget the attitude he has taken up when, as we all fully expect, the finances of the country will be shortly placed under his control. In the new Government which is said to be coming this is the post which has already been assigned to him; and if his first step is to do away with the grant of this £10,000 for Secret Services he will have my humble support.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): The traditional practice for a good many years of those who have had the good or evil fortune, as the case may have been, to occupy the Front Opposition Bench has been on all occasions in Supply to support the views which may be taken by the Government of the day. It is a practice against which I often protested when I occupied a seat below the Gangway. It is a practice which, of course, is capable of being abused; but, at the same time, it appears to me that there is no possibility, on the present occasion, of departing from it. But, as far as this Vote is concerned, I think it is necessary to know the views of the Government on this point before I and my Friends can support them with regard to this Secret Service money. There have been some very strange transformations of character within a very short space of time. For example, we have now a Member of the Nationalist Party in Ireland, if I understand the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) rightly, supporting this Secret Service Fund.

Mr. DILLON: I distinctly stated at the commencement of my remarks that I believed this was not an honest attack on the Secret Service money. If it were I would support it.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Then, as far as I can make out the contention of the hon. Member, it is certainly a strange, if not an arrogant, one, because he seems to maintain that the only honest attack that has ever been made on Secret Service money has been made by the Irish Members. I am disposed to concede a great deal, but not that the Irish Members have a monopoly of honesty, as compared with other portions of the House, in regard to these Votes in Committee of Supply. The fact remains that a Member of the Irish Party is going to support the Vote.

Mr. DILLON: I beg the noble Lord's pardon; I said that I should not vote upon it.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I beg the hon. Member's pardon. At any rate, he is not going to oppose Secret Service money. Then we have the strange fact of the Representatives of the hereditary Whig Party getting up and denouncing Secret Service money in a manner which, I venture to say, would make Lord Russell and Lord Melbourne turn in their graves. We have also had an ex-Attorney General (Sir Henry James) making a statement in the House which I never heard before, although I have often heard discussions upon Secret Service money, that a vast sum of Secret Service money is applied to electioneering purposes.

Sir HENRY JAMES: I stated distinctly that I knew nothing officially; and I never heard anything in connection with my Office to this effect. I know nothing but what has been said openly in this House to-night. If the noble Lord wishes to quote me, it is desirable that he should quote me accurately.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Any statement coming from the right hon. and learned Gentleman comes with great weight and authority, because, undoubtedly, the right hon. and learned Gentleman has been intimately associated with electioneering matters. But, to put all these things aside, there is one person in the House who is capable of informing it and giving guidance in this matter with overwhelming authority. Obviously that person is the First Lord of the Treasury. [Mr. W. E. Gladstone: Hear, hear!] We are not so fortunate as to have an ex-First Lord of the Treasury on the Opposition Bench, and there is no other Member in this House who has occupied that position except the right hon. Gentleman. But the Prime Minister has had 50 years' experience of the Public Service, and he has filled the Office of First Lord of the Treasury for 11 or 12 years out of that period. If, therefore, the statement of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James) is correct, the Parliamentary Secretary of the right hon. Gentleman must have absorbed during his administration of public affairs something like £140,000.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: That is a very wide estimate.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Well, let the sum be put down at £110,000. Obviously the Treasury must be to some degree responsible for the expenditure of this sum; and a First Lord of the Treasury must have some degree of cognizance of the amount which from time to time has been paid to the Parliamentary Secretary under the orders of the Prime Minister. Therefore, anxious as we are on this Bench to give to Her Majesty's Government all the support which by traditional practice they have a right to claim, from the state of feeling in the House, our position may be made extremely difficult unless we, as well as the House in general, are favoured with a larger amount of information upon the matter by the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government, who, after all, is the person who must be held responsible to the public for the disposal of this money.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE) (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): The noble Lord has made a direct appeal to me. I do not wonder at his making it, because the supposition entertained by the noble Lord is a very natural one. It is now 51 years since I first had the honour of holding Office under the Crown. I have had the honour of holding Office not, perhaps, so long as other persons in the history of this country, but still for a very considerable period. I have held the Office of Chancellor of the Exchequer and Prime Minister for about 20 years; and it is, therefore, natural that the noble Lord should think that I know something about Secret Service money. Now, in these circumstances, I will tell the noble Lord exactly what I know. As Chancellor of the Exchequer and First Lord of the Treasury I know absolutely nothing whatever, and I never did. I do not mean to say that I have never had the administration of any Secret Service money; but it was not in the capacity either of First Lord of the Treasury or Chancellor of the Exchequer, in both of which capacities I am as perfectly pure and free from guilt as a babe unborn. But I was Secretary of State for the Colonies 40 years ago, and then a very few hundreds of pounds—perhaps £200 or £300—passed through my hands. I can state now, without any serious departure from my oath as a public servant, how that money was applied. To make a full disclosure, I may say that it was applied to giving pensions to loyalists who had suffered either in the original or in the second American War. That is all I know of the application of Secret Service money. What I have said is not merely the general truth, but the literal and absolute truth. As far as my hon. Friend the Patronage Secretary of the Treasury is concerned, and his title is a *lucus non lucendo*, for he is called Patronage Secretary, although he has no patronage at all—and although the absence of my hon. Friend has been commented upon, I rather think there ought to be a corresponding figure on the other side of the House—he is absolutely precluded from stating, either positively or negatively, anything that he has done with respect to the disposal of this money. In regard to myself, I had no idea when I entered the House that the question of Secret Service money was about to be discussed, and I must say that I never heard a more ingenious argument during the whole time I have been in Parliament than the argument of the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), by which he sought to demonstrate that the use of the £10,000 paid out of the Consolidated Fund could, with perfect regularity, be discussed when we are dealing with a Vote on Account for a month of Secret Service money, which comes within a different category. I will not undertake to look into one portion of that question without taking into consideration the other portions of it. I do not think I could do so with propriety; but if my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James) asks me a question I will frankly give him an answer, because I do not require this discussion to bring me to the opinion I am about to give. First of all, I differ from the hon Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), because I believe that in the vast machinery the Government have at their disposal there are, and always must be, certain purposes for which it is proper to provide by means of Secret Service money. At the same time, holding that opinion, I think that the regulation of those purposes and the administration of those funds is a matter of extreme difficulty, and requires a very great deal of care and attention. And I am not by any means sure, while I cordially recognize the intention and effect of the Treasury Minute, for which I believe we are indebted in substance to the late Government, that the change made by that Minute might not go further. My belief is that much might, and ought to be, done in respect to Secret Service money. I am not prepared at this moment to say that negatively it ought not to be applied to such and such a purpose, because if I did some ingenious Member would immediately get up and find out some other purpose, not exactly the same, but akin to it, and would ask me whether I thought it ought to be applied to that purpose. I have a great jealousy of a process of exhaustion like that, and I would rather not be drawn into it. I admit that there is much desire that the question should be considered. I may, perhaps, say for myself that when I first became Chancellor of the Exchequer I was of opinion that the £10,000 ought to be placed on the Votes; but I could not get one of my Colleagues, all of whom were distinguished men, and some of whom had been Prime Minister, to agree with me. In the political straits in which we are now, and with the present demands on my time, I cannot say that I can apply myself to this question to-morrow, or the next day; but I make the frank admission, whether a division is taken on the Vote now or not, that there ought to be a reconsideration of the subject. I hope the Committee will believe that, in making this statement, I am indicating clearly my own opinion on the subject.

Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): There are two points on which I can entirely agree with the statement which has just been made by the right hon. Gentleman. The first is that no one holding the Office of Chancellor of the Exchequer can, by reason of his Office, know anything whatever of the disposal of Secret Service money; and the second is that the intention and desire of the Treasury Minute, for which the late Government are responsible, was to assimilate, as far as we could, the position of the Secret Service money on the Consolidated Fund to that of the Secret Service money which is subject to discussion in this House. I do not wish to pursue this discussion. It is perfectly obvious that it is impossible for the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury, even if he were disposed, consistently with the due performance of his duty, to give the House any information as to the disposal of the Secret Service money put into his hands. But I hope that I may gather from the right hon. Gentleman that he, at any rate, does not view with favour what is alleged to be the very ancient custom of disposing of part of that Secret Service money for the purpose of Parliamentary elections; and that, in the consideration which he has undertaken to give to the whole subject at as early a date as possible, he will by no means let that opinion, which has been expressed from many quarters, and which I think is entertained very generally in the House, escape his notice. That being so, all I will say is that, in accordance with what has fallen from my noble Friend (Lord Randolph Churchill) on this matter, we shall feel it our duty to support Her Majesty's Government in the Vote now before the Committee; that Vote, as the Committee have been already reminded, not being any part of the £10,000, but being Secret Service money which it is not alleged, as far as I know, has been, or is to be, expended for the purpose of elections.

Mr. MITCHELL HENRY (Glasgow, Blackfriars): I want to point out to the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) that it does not at all follow that the Secret Service money we are now asked to vote is used for political purposes. It was not known to a vast number of Members, until a very short time ago, that the sum of £10,000 was charged on the Consolidated Fund, and not voted by Parliament; and if that is used for electioneering purposes, it is a revelation to the country as well as to many hon. Members of this House. It certainly opens up a vista of possible corruption in this country, of which Radical Members ought to be ready to take notice. The Irish Members have always opposed the Vote for Secret Service money, and they are quite consistent in doing so. On the contrary, I have always supported the Vote for Secret Service money, because I believe that the Government of the country could not safely be carried on without it. Any hon. Member may imagine that there may be crimes threatened over the country, such as the use of explosives, which have to be detected by the Home Secretary; and, in order to enable him to do so, money must be paid for Secret Services. That is one of the disadvantages of the condition of things under which we live, and undoubtedly it has been of late years one of the principal reasons for the great increase in the amount of Secret Service money. I have always supported the Vote for Secret Service, and I shall be satisfied to do so again. I should, however, be very glad to see the amount diminished, and I should be perfectly satisfied with the certificate from the Head of the Department that the money has been expended by him for the purposes for which it was contemplated by Parliament. But the charge which is placed upon the Consolidated Fund is in a totally different position. That charge was placed upon the Consolidated Fund at the beginning of the Reign of Her Majesty, and it was intended to be applicable, first of all, to the Home Secretary; but it appears to have been transferred to the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury, and we are now told how the money has been used. It has been saved up from quarter to quarter, and paid over by those who happen to be in Office to political organizations for the main purpose of influencing elections. No such thing has ever come to my knowledge; and, therefore, I am not open to the imputation of having known anything about the direction in which this money was being applied; and although we ought not to inquire for what purposes Secret Service money is used, the House of Commons ought to declare for what purposes it shall not be used; and one purpose of all others, after the passing of the Corrupt Practices Act and the Representation of the People Act, for which it ought not to be employed, is electioneering. I believe that the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government has given an undertaking on this subject which we all perfectly trust; and, under these circumstances, I would suggest to my hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands) that he should withdraw his opposition to the Vote, because I feel sure that, after the discussion which has taken place, this money will never again, as long as the right hon. Gentleman is at the head of affairs, be applied to election purposes, or to any interference with the opinion of the people.

MR. RYLANDS (Burnley): I wish now, if I can, to save the time of the Committee. I think that the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister must have been extremely satisfactory. The undertaking which the Prime Minister has been good enough to give amounts, at all events, to this—that there will be a change in the application of this Fund in the future. It will, I hope, be placed on the Estimates; and it will be understood that the general feeling which has been expressed in this discussion will have its effect. I gather from the Prime Minister that he gives an undertaking that this sum of money shall in future be appropriated to proper purposes. I have, therefore, very little reluctance in withdrawing the Motion; and I have no doubt that on any further Vote for Secret Service the Prime Minister will state to the House what course he proposes to take. Under these circumstances, I beg to withdraw the Motion. ["No!"] I understand from the right hon. Gentleman that he will look into the matter as soon as the opportunity occurs, with a view of seeing how far a change might be made in the direction indicated by the Comptroller and Auditor General. I did not understand him to name a day; but I gathered that the matter will be under the attention of the Government before the next Vote for Secret Service is taken.

SIR JOSEPH M'KENNA (Monaghan, S.): This will be the first occasion on which I have ever voted for the payment of Secret Service money; but on this occasion I shall vote against the Amendment, because I look upon it as an attempt to make a point against the Government on allegations made without one particle of evidence to sustain them. I was positively shocked to hear the hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. Mitchell Henry) remark, as if it were a proved and admitted fact, that this sum of £10,000 for Secret Service money, granted originally under the Act of 1782, and continued from that day to this, has been largely used by the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury for electioneering purposes. I think that any hon. Member who makes such a statement as that ought to be prepared to quote his authority, which the hon. Member for Glasgow has certainly not done. I therefore hold that no attention whatever ought to be paid to the allegation. I am opposed altogether to the withdrawal of the Motion the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands) has made, and I trust he will be prepared to take a division upon it. We shall then have an opportunity of seeing who are disposed to take advantage of such a Motion as this for pointing a moral at the expense of the Government.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I must say that if I do not follow exactly the course of the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken, I shall, nevertheless, decline to be a party to the withdrawal of the Motion; and I must express my surprise at the action which has been taken by the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands). Secret Service money has proved very useful to Members of various Administrations. The hon. Member may probably be a Member of the next new Administration; and I am certain that the country and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) will have come to the conclusion that no Government could be complete without the services of the hon. Gentleman. My reason for objecting to the withdrawal of the Amendment is this—that I do not believe in the honesty of the Amendment, and I wish to mark my sense of its dishonesty by voting against it. The question of Secret Service money is, unfortunately, not a new question to hon. Gentlemen on these Benches. All through the last Parliament we were constantly objecting to this Vote for Secret Service money; and although we had no certainty, we were undoubtedly suspicious that, so far as its employment in Ireland was concerned, it was used for purposes that were not legitimate. All through the debates which took place we were persistently opposed by the hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. Mitchell Henry). A Predecessor of mine, upon a newspaper with which I was once associated—a man of great ability, and with considerable powers of sarcasm—took a strong dislike to a particular barrister, and he used to say "that the prisoner was defended by so and so," naming this gentleman, "and was accordingly convicted." I may add that, whenever our proposals were opposed by the hon. Member, we were perfectly satisfied that they would receive the approval of the House. What is the meaning of this proposal? Its meaning is to throw dirt upon the Government in connection with the new constituencies? [Mr. Mitchell Henry dissented.] The hon. Member for the Blackfriars Division of Glasgow shakes his head, and we know that his impartiality is always shown by the fact that he invariably turns against the Party he was elected to support. Then we have also had the right hon. and learned Member for Bury (Sir Henry James), who admits now, although for a considerable number of years he was a Member of the Government, that this money may have been employed in corrupting the constituencies. I look upon the whole thing as cant and humbug, and I shall mark my sense of it by voting against the withdrawal of the Amendment.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 44; Noes 319: Majority 275.—(Div. List, No. 104.)

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I desire to take this opportunity of calling the attention of the Committee to the composition and to the acts of the Fishery Board, Scotland. I can assure hon. Members that there exists among the fishermen in Scotland great dissatisfaction that there is no one practically acquainted with fishing who is a member of that Board. I may say that, so far as the business capacity of the Board is concerned, I have no fault to find, nor with the scientific department of the Board generally. I ought to explain that this Board consists of nine members, three of whom are Sheriffs of counties in Scotland, and members of the Board, *ex officio*. The Sheriff of Aberdeenshire has done much service in calling attention to the insecurity of the tenure of the fishermen in their houses; and the Sheriff of Orkney has devoted a great deal of his attention to the interests of fishermen in the counties in which he acts as Sheriff. Then we have the Chairman, Sir Thomas Boyd, a good business man, and one who attends very closely and well to the business of the Board. But the other six members of the Board have no direct acquaintance with sea fishing, and do not seem to possess, so far as an outsider can perceive, any great qualifications for the position which they occupy. A Return was granted to me of the attendances of the various members of the Board, and I am willing to admit that many, if not all, the members attended the Committee with great regularity; but it is complained that there is no one on the Board who has practically any knowledge or experience of the sea fishing business; and I wish to point out to the Committee how, on one or two occasions, the action of the Board would have been more in the interest of the fisheries if there had been someone upon it conversant with the subject. We have had, Sir, a great agitation on the Coast of Scotland against trawling.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): Sir, I rise to Order. The hon. Member for Forfarshire is dealing with a Scotch Vote, and the question I have to ask is, whether it would be competent to any hon. Member afterwards to raise a question on a previous Vote to that on which the hon. Member is now speaking?

THE CHAIRMAN: If the hon. Member moves to reduce the Vote, it would not be competent to go back in the Estimates.

SIR ROBERT PEEL (Blackburn): Sir, I also rise to Order. Your ruling is quite clear; but as we are voting now a large sum in a very unusual way, and as the Secretary to the Treasury gave me personally the assurance, and also assured the Committee on a former occasion, that the Vote on account of Dover Harbour should not be taken without due and full Notice being given to the House, and as that Vote is second on the Paper——

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): I am not asking for any money for Dover Harbour in this Vote.

SIR ROBERT PEEL: I beg the hon. Gentleman's pardon. There is in Vote 2 the sum of £200 to complete £800.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: If the right hon. Gentleman will look to the first column he will see that the "further sum required on account" is left blank.

SIR ROBERT PEEL: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his explanation.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): Sir, I do not quite understand our position. If an hon. Member rises and you call on him, and if he takes up a subsequent question on the Paper, how is it possible for us to take up previous matter?

THE CHAIRMAN: The matter is very simple. It happens frequently that an hon. Member rises to speak on a particular Vote; if any other hon. Member wishes to speak on a previous Vote he rises and says so, and is at once heard. If any hon. Member wishes to speak on a Vote previous to that of the Fishery Board of Scotland he will rise and say so.

SIR ROBERT PEEL: Am I to understand, Sir, that any hon. Member can be heard on any previous Vote?

THE CHAIRMAN: If a Motion is made to reduce a Vote, it would be irregular to discuss a previous Vote.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY: When the hon. Member opposite rose to Order, I was calling the attention of the Committee to the action of the Fishery Board of Scotland. Well, Sir, last year an Act was passed for the purpose of giving the Fishery Board power to regulate trawling on the Coasts of Scotland, and after considerable delay the Board proceeded to deal with that question by experiment; but they did so in such a way that the experiment which was made is not, whatever its result, sufficient to decide the question which it was intended to decide. One of the most extensive trawlers on the North-East Coast of Scotland—Messrs. Johnston, of Montrose—wrote me a letter saying that they had no objection to the prohibited area being extended. These gentlemen are principally interested in trawling on the North-East Coast; but they did not think that the extension of the limit requested by the fishermen would be any injury to the trawlers, while the restricted district prohibited by the Fishery Board would be insufficient for the purposes of the experiment. If there had been a competent fisherman on the Board, such as Mr. Johnston, of Montrose, or anyone practically acquainted with trawling, this matter would have been settled in a different manner, and without prejudice to the trawlers. That is one instance of the advantage which would arise to the fishermen of Scotland if there were some practical men on the Board. But I think we have reason to complain of the Fishery Board on other grounds. Complaints were made, and representations forwarded to the Fishery Board in Edinburgh; and, as the Secretary for Scotland has to approve of the bye-laws of the Fishery Board, the limits of the area of prohibition came under his notice. The Fishery Board recommended the fishermen to submit their case to him in London. A good many fishermen came up to London, and placed the case before the Secretary very ably and very fully. It is complained that there is great reason to believe that this question was finally settled before they left Scotland. It was, I think, hard on the part of the Fishery Board to ask these men to come up to London at a serious expense, in order to lay their case before the Secretary for Scotland, if the matter was a foregone conclusion at the time. That is a point which I think the Secretary for Scotland ought to consider; and if there be any Secret Service money voted for Scotland, I think it might be very well applied to pay the expenses of the poor fishermen who came up to London under the circumstances I have described. Then the Fishery Board have control of certain sums of money for the purpose of improving the harbours of Scotland, and I must say that they have been exceedingly unfortunate in the expenditure of this money for many years past. They have spent a considerable sum of money in many cases; but they have left the harbours in the same state as they found them. A large amount has been spent on the West Coast at Ness, and I am informed on good authority that the harbour there is practically useless. It is completely, or almost completely, silted up, and the money has been thrown away. I am also informed that the Engineer of the Board was warned beforehand that the operation would be attended with this result. I will not now refer to other harbours; but, with regard to the other cases, I believe that past experience has shown that the money expended in this way by the Fishery Board has been attended with no beneficial result. The Fishery Board give us a very valuable Report; I am glad to see in it a quantity of useful information, which is the first step to knowledge in dealing with this subject; but I think that they ought to state in their accounts the amount of money contributed by local proprietors to the harbours on which the public money has been spent. We see it stated that a certain person contributes a sum of money, but we do not know how much it is; and I think it would be an advantage if we were informed of the amount which the proprietors of adjacent lands have contributed to the improvement of the harbours. For my part, I am inclined to think that the money has been spent in too large sums, and that it would be much better if the Board distributed, rather than concentrated, the benefits they have to confer, and attended more to the smaller harbours on the Coasts. For instance, I am aware that the expenditure of a small sum of money would be of great advantage to a fishing village on the Forfarshire Coast; but I am informed that the Board contemplates spending all their money for some years to come on another harbour. Well, Sir, I do not want to go into all the cases; but I ask whether some general principle ought not to be laid down to govern this matter—whether it would not be better to spend smaller sums on small harbours, and whether the improvements of larger harbours ought not to be left more to local effort? Again, with reference to the constitution of the Fishery Board, I wish to point out that it would be a very great advantage if some practical men were upon the Board for the purpose of providing some check on the engineer's plans. I believe the engineer is a competent man; but I think it must be admitted that he has been very unsuccessful. I should like next year to have a Return showing the sums of money which, during the last 10 years, have been expended on harbours around the Coasts of Scotland. This would give us an opportunity of knowing how far the Fishery Board has succeeded in its endeavours to improve the fishing harbours. There is another question which I have no doubt would have been brought under the consideration of the Board had there been appointed some gentleman practically acquainted with fishing. I have urged on the Lord Advocate for some time the expediency of amending the Merchant Shipping Act with respect to fishing boats, so that these boats might be capable of being registered with a view to obtaining money upon them on mortgage. If that were done, the fishermen would be able to borrow money on much more advantageous terms than they can at present. Under the present system, if a fisherman has not sufficient money to purchase a boat, which in some cases costs £300 or £400, and if he cannot raise the money, he goes as a rule to the fish-curer and asks him to advance it, giving the fish-curer the fish he catches until the money is paid. The latter, of course, runs a very considerable risk in transactions of this kind; he has no complete lien on the boat; and, apart from other risks, there is this further difficulty—that he has no preferential claim to the boat. The system of fish-curers advancing money to fishermen to buy boats has prevailed extensively on the East Coast, and much of the prosperity of the fishermen of Scotland has been due to the liberal and judicious advances made in this way to them. But during the last two years there has been, as there has been in almost every other business, a very great depression in the fishing business. Many of the fish-curers on the East Coast of Scotland have, I am sorry to say, lost so much money that they are unable now to provide the advances which they were formerly able to make. The consequence will be that all along the Coast there will be considerable distress amongst the fishermen during the coming fishing season. It is well that the fishermen should be able to obtain advances from the fish-curers; but, at the same time, the Committee will recognize that the fishermen would be in a much more independent position if they could go about these advances in a more business-like way; if they could, in the first place—and I am happy to say that now, by means of Insurance Companies, they can—insure their boats, and if, by means of registering their boats at the Custom House, they could give a mortgage on the boats, they would be able to borrow money at a much lower rate of interest than they have hitherto been able to do. This has been talked of for a considerable time amongst practical fishermen as a desirable thing; but I fail to see any recommendation of such a proposal in the Fishery Board's Report of last year. My contention is that if there were practical men on the Board such a matter would have been attended to; the recommendation would have come up from the Board, and very probably the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) would have seen his way before this time to have brought in a Bill carrying out this small amendment of the Merchant Shipping Act—an amendment which would prove of great value to the fishermen on the East Coast of Scotland. I think I have shown that the Fishery Board might be of very great practical use by putting upon it men practically acquainted with the needs of the fishermen. I admit there is plenty of business qualification on the Board. I recognize the attainments of, and the great amount of work done by, the gentleman who takes charge of the Scientific Department. I also recognize that the Sheriffs of Aberdeenshire and Perthshire have done much good, one in calling attention to the housing of the fishermen, and the other by advocating improvements in the fishing facilities in the Western Islands; but neither gentleman — I say it without meaning the slightest disrespect—can be said to have any practical knowledge of the sea fisheries. What I should like the Secretary for Scotland to undertake to do, seeing that the tenure of the present Board expires next year, is this—to ascertain by some means or other what gentlemen are practically acquainted with the fisheries along the East Coast of Scotland and the Coast of Scotland generally—gentlemen who have the confidence of the fishermen, who know practically all about fishing — and place them upon the Board. I have no doubt that several country gentlemen who are now on the Board will be quite willing to resign their appointments. With the exception of that of the Chairman and of the scientific representative, the appointments are merely honorary; but, in any case, I should expect that some of the members would be quite willing to resign the position they hold now in order to make way for practical men. I hope the noble Earl the Secretary for Scotland (the Earl of Dalhousie) will turn his attention to the subject. I have not the slightest doubt that if the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) indicates an opinion in the direction I have mentioned the noble Earl will be willing to take action in the matter. The fishermen of Scotland have the highest confidence in the noble Earl who now holds the position of Secretary for Scotland; they recognize the great services he did them upon the Commission which was appointed to inquire as to the condition of the fisheries; and I do not know anyone—I do not believe we could get a Secretary for Scotland who would be better able to select for the Board men possessing practical knowledge of fishing than the Earl of Dalhousie. I do not intend to move the reduction of the Vote. I think the sum of money voted for the purpose is small enough. If the Board were differently constituted, I think a little more money might, with very great advantage, be committed to their care. The large amount of benefit which would indirectly accrue to Scotland by a popular reconstruction of the Fishery Board would warrant a larger expenditure than at present is intrusted to the Board. I hope that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate—who, I understand, represents the Secretary for Scotland in this House—will be able to give us some assurance that he himself will direct the attention of the Secretary for Scotland to this subject, and that he will endeavour to have some change made in the composition of the Fishery Board as soon as it possibly can be made; and that, if any of the members resign their seats on the Board in the meantime, he will take care that the next appointments shall be made more in conformity with the wishes of the fishermen of Scotland than is now the case.

Mr. JACKS (Leith, &c.): I do not desire to take up the time of the Committee unduly; but I do wish to emphasize what my hon. Friend the Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) has said with respect to the feeling of the fishermen of Scotland regarding the composition of the Fishery Board. I have spoken to the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) upon this very question; and, with that fairness and practical turn of mind with which he looks at all these things, the right hon. and learned Gentleman put the matter in this way—"It is all very well that we should have a practical fisherman and a practical fish-curer on the Board; but we cannot find any men in such positions who will undertake the duty, because none of these men are in a position to do the work required of them without being paid." It is perfectly true that the members of the Fishery Board are unpaid, and it is equally true that if we put practical men upon the Board they would require to be paid. But what I suggest is this—whether, seeing there are so many high-salaried officials connected with the Board, it would not be possible so to revise the scale of remuneration of some of the *employés* in order to find sufficient money to pay the members of the Board in precisely the same way as the members of Boards of large manufacturing concerns are paid—namely, at the rate of so much per attendance per man. I very respectfully suggest this plan to the consideration of the Lord Advocate.

General Sir GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine): I very gladly support the suggestion made by my hon. Friend the Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) with regard to the sites for fishermen's houses, registration of boats, and trawling. As regards the composition of the Fishery Board, I am quite willing to admit that the President, Sir Thomas Boyd, and the gentlemen who now form the Board, are able men, well skilled in the law, and particularly well qualified to judge of the inland salmon fisheries; they are, however, wanting in regard to the sea fisheries. It is very necessary, indeed, that the Board should have some additional aid in respect to the sea fisheries. During the last Election one of the points most forcibly impressed upon me was the need that the fishermen should have better representation upon the Fishery Board. This could be secured by the Board calling up to the Board one or two of the most representative fishermen along the Coast. All the expenditure necessary would be a small sum for travelling expenses. I also think it advisable that the Board should consult, as assistant members, some of the Inspectors of Fisheries. These Inspectors are generally men of great intelligence and ability; they perform their duties on moderate salaries with skill and judgment; and some of them might with advantage be summoned to the Board to take part in the deliberations. Then, with regard to the question of harbours, I have given some attention to the subject, in the belief that properly-made harbours could readily bear dues on fishing boats to pay for interest and sinking fund on the capital rightly laid out, and have several times placed my views before the Fishery

Board. I hold that good harbours are essential for largely extending the sea fisheries. But I have no hesitation in saying that about 30 harbours erected since 1828, when the grant of £3,000 was first given, are by no means creditable to any Board. I measure the usefulness of a fishing harbour by the test of its fitness to allow boats to enter and leave when drawing 10 feet of water, and in all weather, even at low springwater tides. The point I have urged upon the Fishery Board is that until such time as we have an examination of the harbours of the Kingdom and abroad, it is impossible to lay down regulations for the guidance of engineers in designing and constructing harbours. The two engineers of the Scotch Fishery Board have been singularly unfortunate with all the harbours they have had to do with; at all events, the £250,000, including public and private funds, spent since 1828 in the erection of fishery harbours in Scotland, has not been well spent. Even the harbour of Anstruther, which has cost about £80,000, and which is the best, needs further expenditure. My suggestion is that the Government should employ young skilled engineers to go about from harbour to harbour at home and abroad, and see what defects there are which require remedying; and, furthermore, report on the successful works, and on what system the designs have been drawn, and materials used. In this way, by waiting a short time for the Report, we should not rush with inexperienced haste into the expenditure of money on harbours, but wait a short time till we can see our way to the work being done properly. I strongly recommend the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) to take into consideration the remarks of my hon. Friend (Mr. J. W. Barclay) with regard to the fishermen's boats. The right hon. and learned Gentleman is well aware that I also recommended that the clause which has been introduced into the Crofters Bill providing that loans should be granted for crofters' boats by the Government should be made applicable to the boats of the whole of Scotland. An improved boat is now being used, and public funds might be usefully employed in extending its use. I have also appealed to the Lord Advocate and Fishery Board on behalf of the fishermen's rights to the foreshores. In 1755 those rights for use of boats, nets, lines, and curing fish were recognized by Act of Parliament; but in 1770 another Act partially withdrew those rights. In 1868 another Act took away the remaining rights. No record is known to exist of why these rights have been usurped. Now that the fishermen have the power to vote for Members, I was called on, at the last Election, to protect the ancient rights to foreshores. They are rights of the people; and as in the case of the Crown rights lately put forward by the Lord Advocate time is not allowed to be pleaded in bar of these Crown rights, so lapse of time cannot be urged against the people's rights. I have also appealed against the wrong done to fishermen of the seas by being liable to be accused as poachers for casually hooking sea salmon whilst employed in their lawful business at sea. They may be summoned before two ordinary justices, who may be owners of sea coast salmon fishings, and punished. The Act is a modern one, passed in 1844, and is not an ancient Crown right, as the Act of 1844 tries to make it. Even the trial of game poachers by game owners and game preservers has been taken away. I earnestly advocate more means being given to the Fishery Board to enable the expectations of Scotland being realized in the extension of Scotch fisheries. The brand fees have aided; but there are arrears of fees still in the Treasury. Then the use of brand fees to secure the Post Office from loss on telegraph messages ought not to be. The Post Office should bear the risk of loss, as well as of gain, on all wires.

MR. BOYD-KINNEAR (Fife, E.): I only rise to say a few words in support of the suggestion made by the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay), that there should be some representatives of practical men on the Fishery Board, and by practical men I mean fishermen. If the representatives are not actually fishermen, they ought to be chosen by fishermen. As we have found in this House the immense advantage of having amongst us the Representatives of those who are immediately interested in questions which come under consideration, I am perfectly certain that the Fishery Board would benefit enormously if some of their number had practical knowledge of fishing. As the Representative of a constituency which includes a considerable number of fishermen, I support the suggestion that they should have better representation on the Board.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour) (Clackmannan, &c.): It is certainly satisfactory to find that while hon. Members have indicated certain points on which they think the constitution and working of the Fishery Board may be improved, they feel that, on the whole, the Board, which was established in 1882, has done good work. The hon Gentleman the Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay) laid great stress upon the necessity of a reconstitution of the Board. There is no doubt that it is very desirable—essential indeed—to the right administration of such a Board that in some way or another it should have the opinion of practical men, either by having practical men sitting at the Board, or by communication with them. I recollect very well that the matter was very fully and very anxiously considered when the Board was constituted; and it is only right to say that one great difficulty experienced at the time was to find any gentleman, having a practical knowledge, and able and willing to serve upon the Board, who was not involved on one side or the other in the very hot controversy which then raged in regard to the question of branding. I hope that difficulty may be felt less now. Certainly suggestions have been made this evening as to how it might be possible to get representatives not involved in the way I have indicated. Whether it is possible to act upon the suggestions I cannot now say; but I shall have great pleasure in conveying to my noble Friend the Secretary for Scotland (the Earl of Dalhousie) the suggestions which have been made as to the future constitution of the Fishery Board. I only thought it right to mention that the point was considered in 1882. I dare say that when the time arrives—and it is not very long off now—when certain of the members of the Board go out, it may be found possible to meet the views of hon. Members. The limits which were fixed for experimental protection against trawling have been referred to. I do not know whether this is the time or the place to go into that matter; but perhaps I may be allowed to say that the point was very fully considered by the Board, and the decision to define certain limits was arrived at, not only after the fullest information from their own scientific advisers, whose attainments and capacities have been recognized to-night, but also after hearing the views of the fishermen themselves. I may just say I think that on the part of some of the fishermen there was a slight misunderstanding as to the precise scope and object of fixing those limits. The limits were not fixed to protect in any sense one industry against another; that would not have been in accordance with the clause in the Act of last year. They were fixed for the purpose of making experiments to determine whether the stock of fish was really injured by trawling or not. That was the main object in view, and it was thought that to secure that object the limits fixed were ample. Something has been said with regard to the duties of the Secretary for Scotland. Upon this point there is evidently some misapprehension. The duty of the Secretary for Scotland with reference to bye-laws is to affirm or reject; he cannot make a new bye-law; that must necessarily originate with the Fishery Board. Now, with regard to harbours. It is certainly to be regretted that there is not more money available for the fishery harbours of Scotland. Reference has been made to the amount of money which has been applied to the erection and improvement of harbours. I am sorry to say the fund at the disposal of the Fishery Board is exceedingly small. I believe the fixed grant is somewhere about £3,000, and that the brand fees produce something over £3,000. I do not think the Board have ever had the power of administering more than £6,000 or £7,000. That is very little; but since the present Board was constituted the money available has been administered on the best information they could get. Hon. Members who have taken an interest in the Crofter Question know that one great want of the Western Highlands and Islands is harbour accommodation. It was felt there was great room for developing the fishing industry, and it was with the intention of giving practical effect to this feeling that the harbour at Ness was improved. With regard to the distribution of the money, I am sure my hon. Friends will say there was not much room for a large division. Only small sums can be granted, and the Fishery

Board must make a selection of the case that seems the most clamant, and in which aid is most needed. Now, I entirely sympathize with what has been said in reference to the propriety of making legislative provision for enabling the fine fishing boats to be mortgaged for advances. I think I have mentioned more than once that we intend to introduce a Bill; indeed, I have at present in a forward state of preparation a Bill, making it competent for fishermen who require advances to mortgage their boats. The Bill will not involve any very violent extension of the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act, because these boats are just as fine as any of the old sloops and other craft that come under that Act. In regard to some other matters—notably the foreshores. That is a point to which I will direct my attention. I have answered various questions with regard to it. I do not think the law on the subject is in either a clear or a satisfactory state at present. There have been Acts of Parliament passed from time to time dealing with the matter, and giving rights to use waste and open lands for various purposes. Some of these measures have been repealed. The last repeal of one of two Acts was made in 1868, and I have never been able to find out whether that repeal was intentional or not. I am disposed to think it was not, because I cannot ascertain that there was any discussion on the matter, and I have failed to find any reason for it. I had not the honour of a seat in this House at the time; but I am disposed to think that the repeal of the provision to which I refer, in 1868, was unintentional. I say that all the more, because it is in my knowledge that in 1868 there came before the Courts several cases in which that repeal was overlooked or unknown. I propose at once to communicate with the authorities, particularly in the Department of Woods and Forests, and, if necessary, also with the Board of Trade, to see if they will sanction the introduction of a Bill which I shall be quite ready to bring forward to restore these rights, and place the whole law on the subject on a proper footing, instead of leaving it to be spelt out in many obscure Acts, that even many skilled lawyers are not able to deal with. As to the question relating to salmon, I shall have it considered in connection with the measure dealing with salmon that we have in an advanced state of preparation.

CAPTAIN VERNEY (Bucks, N., Buckingham): I beg to move a reduction of the Vote in Class VI.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. Member for Forfarshire desires to refer to an earlier item.

MR. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): So far as branding is concerned the duty of the Board is administrative, and I could wish that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate would state more explicitly that before next year a practical plan would be prepared for the re-organization of the Board, so that it may command the confidence of the Scotch fishermen. I wish to press this matter on the right hon. and learned Gentleman. I would suggest that the noble Earl the Secretary for Scotland (the Earl of Dalhousie) should make some inquiries in order to ascertain whether some gentleman or gentlemen, now members of the Fishery Board, would not be disposed to resign to give place to men practically acquainted with fishing. I am quite sure that my friend Mr. Williamson, formerly Member for the St. Andrew's Burghs, would not object to resign to permit of some practical man being put on the Board. I recollect that Mr. Williamson used to take a great deal of interest in this subject, and I am sure he would recognize the fact that the relations between the Board and the fishermen would be far more satisfactory if there were a practical man on the Board really acquainted with fishing. As to trawling, the right hon. and learned Gentleman told us quite truly that the restrictions upon trawling were imposed, not for the purpose of giving one set of fishermen an advantage over another, but as an experiment. The contention of practical fishermen who know a great deal about the matter and have fully and fairly considered it, I have reason to believe, is that the area contained within the restricted limit is not sufficient to determine the question which the Fishery Board asked by the experiment. The prohibited area might have been extended without injuring the trawling interests. Because, as I have said, the Montrose trawlers, who are the largest on the North-East Coast of Scotland, and most directly interested in the prohibited area, stated that, so far as they were concerned, they thought it would be advantageous to all interests if the limits were extended. If one of the Messrs. Johnston had a seat on the Board, and could keep the fishermen informed on these matters, it would be of great advantage to this class of the community on the East Coast of Scotland. I am glad the right hon. and learned Gentleman is going to proceed with the Bill for the registration of fishing boats and the Bill to restore the rights of the fishermen to the foreshore, of which they were—unjustly, as I believe—deprived by the Act of 1868. I trust the right hon. and learned Gentleman will very soon redeem his promise on these two points. I can assure him that he will meet with no opposition here; but certainly if the subject escapes his memory, and he forgets to redeem his pledge, within a very short period the Scotch Members will remind him of it. I hope he will not delay in bringing in the measures.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): I must say, after hearing the statement of the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay), that it is a perfect burlesque to appoint as a Fishery Board gentlemen who know nothing whatever about fishing, and yet the hon. Member says that is what happens at this moment in Scotland. I am a Member representing a seaside county, and I have some little acquaintance with fishery matters—though, no doubt, if I were apprenticed to a fisherman for a certain number of years, I should know more about these things. My opinion is, that the best course to take would be to dismiss the present members of the Fishery Board —not one but all of them, and appoint in their places men who know something about their business. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate has pointed out that there are two factions—the branding faction, and the non-branding faction. If you put a man belonging to one faction on the Board, and do not allow the other side to be represented, the result would be a certain amount of dissatisfaction. Why not put on the Board a certain number of both factions, and leave them to fight it out; or, if you prefer it, do not put on any of either faction. But let your Board, at any rate, be composed of people who understand something about fishing. As to the money which it is proposed to devote to these purposes, it should be held over, it seems to me, until the Government have had an opportunity of consulting together, and can see their way to proposing something to ask us to vote for. If the Lord Advocate wanted to appoint a Judge in one of the Sheriffs' Courts in Scotland he would not select a doctor for the post, however eminent he might be in his Profession; and, in the same way, if he wanted a competent person to take charge of an infirmary in Scotland he would not choose a lawyer to do it. But it seems to me quite as absurd to put a lawyer on a Fishery Board—so absurd, in fact, that the House of Commons ought to mark its sense of the absurdity by refusing the Vote altogether. I have another objection to the Vote. So far as I can see the list does not contain an item for the Fishery Board in Ireland. I have no doubt there are fish on the Irish Coast, though I do not happen to have seen any taken. There is a fishing industry in Ireland, and I think it should be cultivated; and though it is rather an awkward thing here to attempt to get a sum of money granted for one object by voting against the granting of a sum for another object, both objects having very great merits, it is, at the same time, the only direct way we have of drawing attention to the subject. I remember some years ago a very long discussion taking place in this House on the subject of the Scotch fisheries, and great pressure being brought to bear on the Government in the matter. During the discussion there was a great deal said about branding; and I remember the Irish Members drew attention to the advantage which the Scotch fishermen enjoyed over the Irish in these matters. So far as I could form an opinion, the House generally was in favour of the branding system. It seemed to me that that system was of great advantage to the Scotch herring fishery, and for the simple reason that the people who buy the article that is sold by reputation can depend upon having an article of a genuine nature if it is branded by an official who thoroughly understands his business; and I believe that if we were to do away with the system of branding the result would be that the parties who would do the branding would be less careful as to the kind of fish they brand, and the consequence would be that the reputation of Scotch herrings would go down. The persons who buy would not have an opportunity of satisfying themselves of the exact quality of the fish they are obtaining. The system of official branding gives protection against those practices which have been so much complained of in connection with Sheffield cutlery and other articles whereby fictitious brands are put upon goods. If you have a fish-curer in Scotland with an established brand which has secured a great reputation, the careful buyer, placing dependence upon the brand, will give a preference to the article sold by that curer. But if you allow the brand of this curer to be imitated, an inferior article, most likely at a smaller price, would get into the market, the buyers would be deceived, a prejudice would be created against the immense quantities of fish cured in that particular place, and indirectly, in a very short time, the general reputation of the article would be lessened. A person who wanted to sell herrings on the Continent would say to customers—"I can give you herrings of such and such a brand at a less price than another packer can give them to you." In this way would be brought about depreciation in the quality and reputation of Scotch herrings. So far as I have heard the discussion which has taken place on this question, I think the only way in which we can bring about a satisfactory settlement of it is by eliciting from the Government an adequate explanation, with a promise to make very great reforms in this Fishery Board. If that is not done, the total Vote should be reduced by the amount of the item of £2,500 for the Scotch Fishery Board. I beg to move that this item be omitted.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Item of £2,500 (Scotch Fishery Board), be omitted from the proposed Vote."—(*Mr. Biggar.*)

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I do not think that any specific or good purpose will be served by disallowing this Vote, or by voting on the question. I am prepared to say, in support of what has fallen from the hon. Member opposite, that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate has put us off very much in regard to this fishery question. We have, however, now made some progress. We have obtained the promise that the question of the boats will be attended to without further delay. At the same time, we have failed to elicit—at least, I failed to do so the other day—any specific promise with regard to fishermen's houses. The Lord Advocate is perfectly aware that this matter came up in connection with the subject of harbours, and that the one question was played off against the other. Conditions are made as to harbours, and if the fishermen do not comply with them the thing is worked out in the conditions of tenure on which they hold their houses. But with the assurances given by the Lord Advocate, and if the Secretary for Scotland will give the subject his attention, I hope we may have a satisfactory settlement. I represent, I think, as large a number of fishermen as any other Representative in the House; and I say, with great confidence, that nothing has produced so much irritation amongst the fishing population as a belief that their interests are not represented by practical men. I am quite sure that if practical men were on the Scotch Fishery Board it would give a confidence beyond what might be expected, because practical men would have an opportunity of stating the views of the fishermen on the Board, and of hearing the objections to them. This would satisfy the fishermen; but so long as they believe they are represented by gentlemen incapable in many ways—who do not understand the fishing industry and what they want—they will not be satisfied, and I do not think they ought to be. In the meantime, I would thank the Lord Advocate with gratitude for his promise; and we may now leave the matter in his hands with the assurances he has given. I would also say, in confirmation of what was said by the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. J. W. Barclay), that proposals for dealing with these subjects will not be opposed in the House. The measures he has promised for the benefit of fishermen would be passed without much trouble.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): This question of Scotch fisheries is very old history in this House. Year after year the Government have said—"Leave it to us;" and hon. Members, like the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken, re-echo the request and say—

"Leave it to the Government." But I should like to ask Scotch Members what they have got in the past by leaving it to the Government? Two years ago I took part in a discussion on this very question, and pressed the Government to inform me as to what were the qualifications of the gentlemen forming the Scotch Fishery Board. I commenced, I think, with the Chairman. I asked the Representative for Scotland on that occasion for what reason the gentleman holding the difficult and important position of Chairman had been elected—what, in fact, were his qualifications? The Scotch Representative in this House glared at me across the Chamber, and said—"What are his qualifications? Why, they are of the very best. He has been twice Provost of some place, and he is a bookseller." This was a little too strong for the House, and I must confess I proceeded to make a joke. I asked whether this gentleman had ever written a book on fishing? and I was answered solemnly across the House —"I do not know." I then inquired—"Will you undertake that he shall write a book on fishing?" and the grave and solemn reply I received to that was—"I will see." I do not attack this Chairman of the Scotch Fishery Board as a publisher or bookseller; but I do say that the fact of his being such is not an essential qualification for the post he holds. This gentleman was put on the Board because he is a supporter of the Government. When the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Esslemont) gets a little older he will not be so ready to leave everything to the Government. That is what the Government want. They get up in this House and make facile speeches, and give promises that mean nothing, and say—"Leave it to us; the matter is under our consideration." The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate has used this latter phrase three times to-night—"It is under my consideration." Yes; it is under the right hon. and learned Gentleman's consideration, no doubt, and so it will be next year, and the year after, and the year after that. But what is the outcome of all this consideration? Why, that your Chief Commissioner is a bookseller, and that a bookseller will continue to be your Chief Commissioner. It is not for me to fight the battle of the Scotch Members; but if they want to

impress the Government and the right hon. and learned Gentleman who has this question under his consideration, and want to make his "consideration" a little sharper, I would advise them to take a vote on this question.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I wish the Committee to trust the Lord Advocate, because I am told that the present arrangement comes to an end in the course of next year. The appointment was only made for five years; and I desire to remind the right hon. and learned Gentleman of the fact, and to impress upon him the desirability of amending the present arrangement when the time comes.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): I do not want to put the Committee to the trouble of a division; still, unless the promise of the right hon. and learned Gentleman is stronger and more circumstantial than promises usually are, I think we shall be bound to divide. This Fishery Board seems to be of such a preposterous nature that we should not countenance it at all. The Government ought to withdraw or postpone the Vote, and then, when it is brought forward again, we shall have an opportunity of hearing, indirectly, from the Secretary for Scotland whether or not he has made up his mind to entirely reform this Fishery Board. I did not know that the President of the Board was a bookseller. Surely it is a practical joke to put a bookseller at the head of a Fishery Board. It is said that Scotchmen are incapable of joking, or of appreciating a joke; and it may not have been a Scotchman who did this. But, whoever did it, it seems to me that he wanted to try a practical joke on the Scotch people. I think the Vote should be withdrawn, and that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate should hold a consultation with the Secretary for Scotland. If we do not get a promise that that course will be adopted I think we should divide.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I desire to support the suggestion of the hon. Member opposite. We find here a Chairman receiving £700 or £800 a-year who is best known in Scotland as the publisher of a certain almanack, and we find associated with him on the Board three Sheriffs who may know a great deal about law, but certainly are not likely to know much about fish. Besides these, there are upon the Board a Liverpool merchant, then a Perthshire laird, and a timber merchant from Greenwich. Most of these are gentlemen who have important work of their own to perform, and I do not think they are fit to sit upon this Board, particularly at the present time, when we know that one or two important points are coming up for discussion with regard to trawling and fishing generally. The questions that are about to be raised are very important, as affecting the unfortunate crofter drift-net fishermen, who are being driven away from their fishing grounds by the trawlers, just as they were driven away from the land by the large farmers. The action of the Fishery Board is not at all satisfactory to the drift-net fishermen, and I contend that we ought to have a different class of men on the Board to those which at present compose it. I agree with the hon. Member opposite that to leave this matter altogether in the hands of the Government would not be wise. We know that the Departments have in many respects quite enough to do, and will permit things to drift on as long as we will allow them. If we bring this matter energetically before them, and point out the absurdity of the present system, and the necessity of appointing men who understand what they are doing, we shall be doing a great deal for the benefit of these fishermen. Men who have Town Council and other work to do should not be appointed to this Board. You should have as Chairman a man who is prepared to devote his entire time to the work, and who knows something about these scientific questions underlying it. The Government should withdraw the Vote for the present, and when it comes up again we should consider what would be the best course to take.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine): I hope the hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) will not press this Motion. He has referred to what he declares to be the unsatisfactory position of the Irish Fishery Board, as compared with the Scotch; but I would remind him that the net amount contributed by the State in the case of the fisheries of Ireland is more than that contributed in the case of Scotland. We, in Scotland, are content with our method of managing these matters, and the Irish people are content with their method. No doubt, the gross cost for the Scotch Vote appears large; but the income derived from the fees levied on herrings exported is about £11,000, of which nearly £6,000 is taken by Government, and the balance is appropriated for harbours, and for guaranteeing the Post Office from loss by insufficient messages by telegraph wires laid along the Coast. Then, with regard to the Chairman of the Scotch Board, to whom derogatory allusions have been made, I am bound to say that I have every reason to be pleased with the manner in which he has carried on his duties. The Report of the Scotch Fishery Board seems to be satisfactory. It contains a great deal of information, the like of which I should like to see given in the case of Ireland. No doubt, the state of our harbours is far from being satisfactory, and in this respect our Board needs stirring up. Then we require to have larger boats than we have now, and these defects apply to both Scotland and Ireland; and I trust the necessities of the case in these two respects will not be lost sight of.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): We Irish Members were under the impression that, in objecting to the character of the Scotch Fishery Board, we were assisting Scotch Representatives. Now, however, we understand that, although they have raised so many complaints against their Fishery Board, the Scotch Members seem to be perfectly satisfied with it. Surely this is another practical joke.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I do not understand that the Scotch Members, as a body, are satisfied with the Board. This Board, I find, has a Chairman, Secretary, first clerk, second clerk, and third clerk. It generally happens that the gentlemen who receive the largest salaries are the gentlemen who do the least work, and have the smallest qualification; and, judging from what has been said, I think this rule is observed in the case of the Scotch Fishery Board. It has, however, been said by some Members of the House that the Government are fond of making promises, but not fond of keeping them. I do not find that at all. The Government usually keep the promises they make; but what we complain of is, that they do not make any promises at all. The customary form of answer is, "the thing is under consideration," or "we will look into it," and that, of course, means nothing. In this case we have been told that the Board has been appointed for five years, and that the fifth year will be up next year. Evidently the Scotch Members are very dissatisfied with the present constitution of the Board; and it would be very easy for the Government, if they intended to conform to the wishes generally expressed, to say they do not intend to appoint this bookseller, or the three Sheriffs, or the timber merchant next year. That is the only pledge which will satisfy the Committee in this matter; and if that pledge is not given I trust the Motion for the reduction of the sum will be persevered with.

Mr. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): It is quite true, as an hon. Gentleman has said, that the cases of Ireland and Scotland in regard to fisheries are by no means parallel. The Irish Members have no objection to this money being paid, if the Scotch people wish it should be paid. We thought, when we interfered in this discussion, that the Scotch Members were by no means satisfied with the constitution of the Board, or the manner in which the Board did its work. I think it is the duty of all Members of the House, no matter whence they come, to see that the money of the nation is laid out to the best advantage; and certainly we are anxious to assist the Radical Members from Scotland in their endeavour to reform their Fishery Board. We have proved by our conduct that we do take an interest in the Scotch fisheries; indeed we in Ireland, who have a great deal to complain of as to the way our fisheries are managed, have a sympathetic feeling for the people of Scotland in fishery matters. But the hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar), with that consideration which is his characteristic, does not wish to divide unnecessarily upon this question, and he has made a most reasonable proposition to the hon. Gentlemen in charge of the Vote. I hope they will see their way to accept his proposal, which is that they should defer the taking of this item pending the decision which we understand is being arrived at.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): I should like to hear from the Government whether or not they intend to reform the Scotch Fishery Board? I know that the question of trawling is one which has given rise to a very great deal of controversy, and I must confess that I am not very favourable to the lending of money on movable property; as a general rule, I should be very slow to recommend such a system. Besides, I question very much whether it is within the legitimate province of the Government to make advances upon such property as vessels of large or small size. This is only a Vote on Account; and, therefore, I trust the Government will give us a pledge that we shall have an opportunity, at no very distant date, of reconsidering this question. If the Government would only undertake that they will reconstitute this Board, and get rid of the timber merchant, who may be a very respectable and worthy gentleman in his own line, and select as members of the Board gentlemen who are qualified to attend to fishery matters, I think the Committee might fairly rest satisfied. The Chairman of the Board may be a very estimable man as a publisher; but he can hardly be considered a suitable person to hold the position of Chairman of a Fishery Board. What the Government ought really to do is to express the opinion that the present system is perfectly indefensible, and that they hope to be able to entirely remodel the Board, so that it shall in future be composed of gentlemen who thoroughly understand all questions connected with fisheries.

The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. R. W. Duff) (Banffshire): I hope the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Biggar) will now allow us to take the Vote. He has reminded the Committee that this is only a Vote on Account, and that there will be another opportunity of discussing the question of the constitution of the Scotch Fishery Board when the Fishery Vote comes on. This new Board was appointed on the recommendation of the Committee over which I had the honour to preside; and I think that, on the whole, the Board has worked well. It is quite true, as the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) has stated, that at the end of the five years it is quite possible to reconstitute the Board. Originally there was a great desire to obtain practical men to serve on the Board; but, for the reason stated by my right hon. and learned Friend, we were not able to obtain them. The hon.

Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) referred to the branding of herrings, and said they would like the brand in Ireland. That question was considered by the Irish Commissioners, and by a gentleman very well known to hon. Gentlemen sitting below the Gangway opposite—Dr. Brady—and the decision they arrived at was that Ireland did not want the brand. If the Irish people do not want the brand, we do not want to force it upon them. I have no doubt my noble Friend the Secretary for Scotland (the Earl of Dalhousie) will consider attentively what has been said in the House to-night, and that if an opportunity should occur at the end of the five years, every endeavour will be made to meet the wishes of the House by obtaining the services of some men more practically acquainted with fisheries than those who at present constitute the Fishery Board. Having myself given considerable attention to this question, and the Board having been appointed, as I have said, on the recommendation of the Committee I presided over, I am bound to say, in justice to the Board, that they have hitherto done very useful work indeed. I do not say the Board is perfect. It has only been in existence since 1882, and I am thoroughly convinced that during its short existence it has done very good and useful work. The Secretary for Scotland will, I am sure, bear in mind what has taken place to-night; and, that being so, I hope we may now be able to get the Vote.

Mr. O'HEA (Donegal, W.): I quite agree with hon. Gentlemen that the constitution of the Scotch Fishery Board is such as to be entirely condemned. The fishermen of Scotland have made repeated complaints that their representations do not receive the attention they are entitled to receive at the hands of those who ought to have their best interests at heart. If there is anything more than another which would conduce to the advancement of the men who pursue the fishing trade, it is that they should have a Board as a sort of tribunal before whom they could lay their just and legitimate grievances. The hon. Gentleman the Civil Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. R. W. Duff) referred to the question of trawling. There is nothing which tends so largely to augment the revenues of the poor people than this trawling, when it is carried on according to certain recognized rules and conditions. I remember that some time ago the fishermen of Bantry Bay had their drift nets interfered with by trawlers. The result was that upon one occasion there was an amount of disorder, and such breaches of the peace, that between 20 and 30 people were put to considerable expense in standing their trial at the Assizes. It is in consequence of the defective condition of Boards like the Scotch Fishery Board that the grievances of the fishermen so frequently come to the surface as at present. The people of the United Kingdom were rather amused a few years ago at the caricature of the ruler of the "Queen's Navee." I suppose the gentlemen who constitute this Board know about as much of fishing as the gentleman who, in the opera of H.M.S. *Pinafore*, held the position of ruler of the "Queen's Navee" knew about navigation. The question which has been raised to-night is an important one, not only for the interests of the fishermen of Scotland, but for those of the fishermen all along the Coast of Great Britain. I expected from the hon. Gentleman the Civil Lord of the Admiralty some assurance that the Board will be reconstituted and reformed. I am sorry that such an assurance has not come from him, as I quite agree with everything my hon. Friend the Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) has said in regard to this subject. I trust that, when the tenure of office of the present Board is up, the Board will be composed of men who understand everything appertaining to fishing, and that they should give their whole time to the duties of their office. Upon the face of it, the present Board is an absurdity. The business of Boards such as this cannot be efficiently discharged unless the gentlemen comprising the Boards understand the business, and devote their undivided time to the work.

Mr. J. A. BLAKE (Carlow): I do not altogether agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar) in the suggestion he has made as to the branding for the Irish herrings. I happen to hold an official position in connection with fisheries, and therefore I have given considerable attention to this question. Most of the Irish herrings are caught at an early period, and they are, consequently, sold at higher prices than could be obtained subsequently. I agree with my hon. Friend (Mr. Biggar) that a great deal of injustice has been done towards the Irish fisheries in contradistinction to the great favour extended towards the Scotch fisheries. I shall not commit any breach of official secrecy if I mention one remarkable fact in connection with the Irish fisheries. A large quantity of herrings are caught on the Irish Coasts in the winter season; they might be sent abroad and be useful for the brand. We applied to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury for the small sum of £50 for the purpose of making experiments in the winter cure of herrings; but while thousands of pounds a-year were lavished on the Scotch fisheries, the Department to which the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) belongs refused us £50 for making experiments which might have resulted in a benefit to the Irish fisheries of thousands of pounds a-year. Another fact I wish to mention. For the 20 years of my life I have spent in this House, I have sought to obtain a grant from the Treasury for the purpose of promoting Irish fisheries by way of loans. I have been obstinately refused. It may be said we have loans now. We have loans from a fund which belongs to Ireland, which we succeeded in discovering and applying to the object I had in view. The most decided enemies we had — and generally they have been the bitterest enemies of Irish grants—were the Scotch Members. Only very recently a proposal was made in this House to devote thousands of pounds in the giving of loans to the Scotch fishermen. The proposal was unanimously passed by the House. For years, however, the House of Commons has refused to grant loans to the Irish fishermen. I am very happy to say that had the question come to a division there is not a single Member of the Party to which I have the honour to belong who would not have voted in favour of the granting of loans to the Scotch fishermen. While the utmost favour has been extended to the Scotch fisheries, the Irish people have received nothing from the British funds in aid of their fisheries. Now, with regard to the constitution of the Scotch Fishery Board. I happened to be appointed as an expert on the Fishery Committee for Scotland over which the hon. Gentleman the Civil Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. R. W. Duff) so very ably presided, and I must say that the recommendations which I had some hand in drawing up have been admirably carried out, and that they have in Scotland an advantage that I very much wish we had in Ireland. In addition to the salaried officials, they have upon the Board a number of independent intelligent gentlemen. I confess I disagree with one of my hon. Friends, who said it was objectionable to have members of the Board who do not devote all their time to the work of the Board. The Scotch Board enjoys a great advantage which I wish we enjoyed in Ireland. I sincerely wish we had in Ireland in connection with fishery matters that independent intelligent action which is most advantageously carried out in Scotland, owing to the presence upon the Fishery Board of independent intelligent gentlemen acquainted with the subject with which they are called upon to deal.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): One word in regard to what my hon. Friend the Member for Carlow (Mr. Blake) has said. What was said as regards the salaried officials was, that the salaried members of the Board—such, for instance, as the Chairman—should give their whole time to the work of the Board. Of course, it is not so necessary in Ireland to have herring brands as it is in Scotland. As has been very properly pointed out, the two systems are different; but what I recommend—and I speak from a trader's point of view—is that where an official brand can be had, it should be had. I do think that the people of Scotland who possess an official brand, and who sell their fish on the faith of the value which the brand gives, should be very slow to do away with it. If they did away with the brand the character of the article would deteriorate very much, and the result would be exceedingly injurious to the interests of the business in which they were engaged. Now, the explanation of the hon. Gentleman the Civil Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. R. W. Duff) is a very fair one. He calls our attention to the fact that this is only a Vote on Account, and that before the Vote for the Scotch Fisheries is finally disposed of there will be another opportunity of discussion. I have no doubt that after what has taken place to-night the hon. Gentleman, after consultation with the Chief of the Department, will be able to see his way to pursue in the future in regard to the Scotch fisheries a much more reasonable course than has been pursued in the past; and, under these circumstances, I beg to withdraw my opposition to the Vote.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question again proposed.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): Mr. Courtney, in this Vote there is an item of an extraordinary character—it has reference to the chaplain attached to the Household of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Now, Sir, it is well known that the present Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, a gentleman whom we all esteem and who, I hope, will remain in Ireland for very many years to come, is a Presbyterian, and I find that in the Estimates a considerable sum of money is asked for the payment of a clergyman of the Church of England. Then the chaplain to His Excellency receives as salary £184 12*s.* 8*d.* a-year, and over and above that he receives an allowance of £150 a-year in lieu of a furnished house—that makes £334 per annum. I do not object to the Lord Lieutenant having a chaplain attached to his Household in Dublin; but what I do object to is this—that whereas the religious ministrations which the present Lord Lieutenant prefers are those performed by a Presbyterian minister, and the Presbyterian minister, who in reality is attached to the Household of His Excellency, does not get a single farthing from the State, a clergyman of the Church of England, who has nothing to do with the religious functions to the Lord Lieutenant, is paid the sum of £334 a-year. The matter is of no importance to me personally—I neither belong to the Church of England nor the Presbyterian persuasion — but I think, in the interest of fair play, if the State gives money to be paid to a chaplain for the Lord Lieutenant, or for any Viceroy representing Royalty in any part of the world, the clergyman who receives the grant ought to be a clergyman of the religion to which the Viceroy belongs. The appointment of chaplain to the Household of the Lord Lieutenant is not a permanent one; it is like that of the chaplain to the Lord Mayors of London and Dublin. The Lord Mayors appoint their own chaplains. If the appointment were a permanent one there would be some reason for saying that as nine out of every ten Viceroys are members of the Church of England we do not like to disturb the clergyman in the position he held. But the Government appointed as chaplain to the late Viceroy a Church of England minister; the present Lord Lieutenant is a Presbyterian, a Presbyterian minister performs all the religious functions of the Household, but gets not a single farthing by way of payment, while the Church of England minister receives £350 from the State. I am glad the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant (Mr. John Morley) is present, because I am sure he will take very much the same view of the matter as I do. The question is whether the real chaplain to the Lord Lieutenant should receive the money allowed by the State, or whether we shall give our sanction to a sinecure?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The subject which the hon. Member has raised has already been dealt with by me in answer to a Question put to me by some hon. Gentleman in the quarter of the House in which he sits. I communicated to the House the opinion of His Excellency upon the present arrangements, and the effect of that opinion was that His Excellency was entirely satisfied with the ministrations of the chaplain. His Excellency attends, as he informs me, and as I on the previous occasion informed the House, both the Presbyterian services and the services of the Church of England; and, under these circumstances, I cannot think it would be worth while to alter the existing arrangements.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): Under these circumstances I withdraw my opposition to the Vote. I only drew attention to the matter because the statement appears weekly in the Irish papers that the Lord Lieutenant attended the Presbyterian services. Of course, the Lord Lieutenant would not be likely to raise the question himself.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London): The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Molloy) has referred to the practice of the Lord Mayors of Dublin and London in respect to the appointment of chaplains. I know nothing about Dublin; but as regards London, I may inform the Committee that many gentlemen who are not members of the Church of England, including several Members well known in the last Parliament, have, upon their appointment as Lord Mayor, appointed clergymen of the Church of England as their chaplains.

Mr. E. HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): Seeing that the Lord Lieutenant avails himself of the services of both a Church of England minister and a Presbyterian minister, there is a very simple way out of the difficulty, and that is to divide the salary equally between the two clergymen.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): The hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London (Sir Robert Fowler) has spoken of the custom observed by the Lord Mayors of London in the matter of the appointment of chaplains. Our custom in Dublin is very different. The present Lord Mayor of Dublin, who is a Roman Catholic, has as his chaplain a clergyman of the Church to which he belongs; but if next year the Lord Mayor should happen to be a member of the Church of England he will appoint a clergyman of the Church of England his chaplain.

Mr. TUITE (Westmeath, N.): I rise to make some comments on the manner in which the Circuits of the Chief Commissioners of the Land Commission Court are held in Ireland. In the county of Westmeath I know of several tenants who, from want of means, were unable to go to Dublin to attend the appeals brought forward in their cases by the landlords. The result was that those tenants were obliged to settle out of Court on disadvantageous terms. That is a great injustice, and I express a hope that the Government will call the attention of the Chief Commissioners to the fact. I am aware that the reason assigned for the Commissioners not going to Mullingar, the capital of Westmeath, is that they cannot get in the town private lodgings sufficiently grand, although there is a good hotel there. I suggest that the Courts of the Land Commission should be held in centres which would embrace three or four counties, choosing the centre where, of course, the railway communication is good. Now, the railway communication is good at Mullingar, and I should say it would be a very convenient centre at which the Land Commissioners might hold their Courts. I raised this question in the House some time ago, but received no satisfaction at all with regard to it; and, therefore, I again take the opportunity of asking the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he will give some assurance that the Courts of the Land Commission shall be held at places where the tenants can be heard with convenience to themselves?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: I should have been better able to deal with the subject brought forward by the hon. Member who has just sat down, if I had known that it would have been raised on a Vote on Account. I am unable to say more than that the Land Commissioners, with whom I have had tolerably frequent communication, have assured me that they do the best they can with the resources in their hands to make their Circuits as convenient as possible. I am afraid the arrangement is sometimes attended with inconvenience, and even hardship; but the Commissioners assure me that they regret the inconvenience, and endeavour to reduce the hardship as much as lies in their power. I can assure the hon. Member that the desire of the Government is that every opportunity should be given for hearing these cases with the utmost speed, and in the manner most convenient for all the parties.

Mr. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): I wish to call the attention of the authorities to the irregularity of payments in some cases by the Charity Commissioners. I have a case in view in my own neighbourhood, which will illustrate the point to which I desire to call the attention of the Committee and the Government. Certain payments are made about Midsummer, and, as a rule, we receive the money for these payments with regularity; but sometimes it occurs that the gentleman in charge of the funds is absent, and there is great inconvenience in consequence to the poor people who are anxiously expecting what is due to them. Lately some 30 or 40 people receiving pensions from this office came to me and pointed out that payment was overdue seven days. I need hardly say that these are poor people, and that, as a rule, they owe their money, and have to pay it directly they receive it to shopkeepers who give them credit. On the occasion I refer to the people in question were in the greatest straits, and we wrote to Dublin, and in reply to our letter we were informed that the Commissioners were on vacation, and that no payment could be made until their return. I think, Sir, that is a most singular state of things. These poor people would have been in the most dire distress were it not that the parish priest and others in the neighbourhood discounted a bill, and by this means paid the poor people their small allowances pending the arrival of a remittance from the Charity Commissioners. I think that a little forethought would do away with the gross inconvenience that arises under such circumstances; if the Commissioners, for instance, had taken the precaution of sending us the money some few days before they went away on vacation these people could have been paid. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will draw the attention of those in charge of this important service to the very great inconvenience which arises from their action, and point out that the persons who suffer most are the poorest in the locality; and it is hardly fair that persons in the locality should be obliged to discount bills for the purpose of providing money which was overdue.

MR. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.): My hon. Friend the Member for East Waterford (Mr. P. J. Power) has complained of the irregularity of payments under this Vote, and I have a complaint to make with regard to a case in which no payment has been made at all. I have frequently brought under the notice of the Government the case of the Eaton bequest, made to the town of Wicklow as far back as 1796, for the purpose of establishing a woollen factory, and which now amounts to the sum of £4,000. Not 1*s.* of that bequest has been received. I understand that this sum is locked up somewhere. Now, the labouring classes of Wicklow have been for a long time in need, and it would be a great advantage to them if this sum of money could in any way be made available for their benefit. I trust that the Chief Secretary, who has had this matter before under his notice, as it has been under the notice of several of his Predecessors, will endeavour to take some steps to bring the question of this bequest, which has now been nearly 100 years in abeyance, to a satisfactory termination.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): With reference to this matter, I have to say that I recollect bringing the whole thing under the notice of the Commissioners more than a year ago, and furnishing them with a copy of the will. At that time I received a promise from the Board that the matter would be brought under the notice of the Attorney General for Ireland, and that something would be done. But nothing has been done; and I am told that there are legal difficulties in the way. But surely the mind of the Law Officers could be made up in less than a year. It is a real scandal that this should be allowed to continue; and, therefore, I trust that it will be terminated for good or for evil, in one way or the other, without delay.

MR. JOHN MORLEY: I think that the hon. Members who have just spoken with regard to this bequest have left out of sight, in the complaint they are making, the fact that the decision of a Court of Justice has to be obtained. That is, of course, a consideration which cannot be left out of the account. I am not aware of the grievance of the hon. Member for East Waterford (Mr. P. J. Power); but if it can be shown that there is any such grievance, or any dereliction on the part of the Board, I will certainly do my best to put it right.

MR. CHANCE: I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman intends to state to the Committee that the case of the bequest to the town of Wicklow has been before any Court of Justice; but, if so, I shall be glad to hear it. My request, however, dates from a year ago, and I have been hearing ever since that the matter has been under the attention of the Attorney General for Ireland. I shall be glad then to hear if the Commissioners have been prevented from acting by the decision of a legal tribunal. I ask—Why was not the case brought into the Court of Chancery a year ago? I think that it has been admitted that a considerable grievance exists. The income has been lost, and we want to know whether we can recover any portion of it? Under the circumstances, I ask whether any steps can be taken to expedite the action of the Commissioners in dealing with this bequest?

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I am aware that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the

Lord Lieutenant is overwhelmed with business; and I, therefore, will only remind him of his promise in the matter of the Fishery Board. I wish to ask the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury, with regard to the answer he gave the other night, what he intends to do in the matter of the River Bann drainage? This question has been before the House for a considerable time, and as long ago as 1880 a Royal Commission, on which were the hon. Members for Galway, Tyrone, and Winchester, sat and reported on this question generally. Ever since that time the Board of Works have been shilly-shallying with the question. When the hon. Gentleman says that it is possible for five or more individuals to move the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to do certain things, he seems to have overlooked the fact that we have been moving the Lord Lieutenant for some time without effect. The River Bann flows down Lough Neagh into the sea, and divides two counties, Antrim and Londonderry. Great difficulty has been caused to the farmers along the river by the system of navigation in operation on the river, which is the same as has been the curse of the farmers on the banks of the Shannon. These navigation works, which cost £40,000, have to be maintained at an annual charge of £14,000, most of which, I believe, will ultimately fall on the ratepayers. The navigation works in Ireland have been a sham; they have been a sham on the Shannon, where the farmers have been flooded, and the Royal Commissioners have reported against the expenditure on the works. You have in these two counties ample railway facilities. I would not, however, complain of the navigation works if there was anything to navigate, but there is not; and I must protest, therefore, against this system of damming up the river in view of the navigation which never comes, while the farmers are seriously injured every year. It is a perfectly monstrous state of things. Let the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury tell me that there is some navigation, and show the Committee that it is worth more than the amount of injury which is done to the farmers, by not being able to cultivate the land which is periodically flooded, and I will say no more. That is not so, however; and, therefore, I feel it necessary to urge the hon. Gentleman to take some steps to put a stop to the present state of things. What could be simpler than for the hon. Gentleman to introduce a Bill to amalgamate the Drainage and the Navigation Boards, and to constitute a franchise which will enable the farmers to be adequately represented upon it? What you must have, in my judgment, is this. You must have a Board so constituted that it will be thoroughly representative of all interests. If you have a Board simply representing the people of Coleraine, and not the farmers along the banks of the river, it will be of no use at all. Representing as I do the farmers along the banks of this river, I am bound to say that it is a farce to tell them—"Live horse until you get grass," or rather until the water subsides. Over and over again promises have been made to them that the matter will be attended to; but nothing has been done. When Earl Spencer travelled through the country some time ago he received a deputation on this very subject, and the grievances of the farmers were put before him; but beyond the fact that he gave them a few civil words, nothing, so far as I am aware, have yet been done in the matter. I must say that to have spent £40,000 or £50,000 on navigation works in this way, without any object or good result, seems to me to be as good a plan for throwing money into the sea as can possibly be devised. As far as the County Antrim side of the river is concerned, I am entirely impartial as to what is done. There is not a single Member for Antrim sitting on these Benches along with my hon. Friend the Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell); and I am, therefore, entirely impartial as far as Antrim is concerned; but, as far as the farmers on the Derry side are concerned, I must urge their case upon the Government, because it is a shame that they should be put off in this way from year to year without having their grievances redressed. I must ask the Chief Secretary to give us some assurance that he will introduce a measure to give the farmers on the banks of the river an adequate representation on the Board, and, at the same time, that he will see that this £1,400 a-year which is being paid for the maintenance of the navigation works will be stopped, and that the obstructions to the river will be done away with. I would point out one very remarkable fact in connection with these works. The farmers along the banks of the River Bann are, perhaps, the most loyal and Protestant of the farmers of any part of Ireland; but so bitterly do they feel about this annual flooding of their land, that not so long ago they took dynamite and attempted to blow away the navigation works. If that had taken place in the South of Ireland I should have been prepared to have deprecated such a course; but as it occurred in loyal Antrim I shall be very chary in saying anything at all in regard to it. I do trust, however, that the hon. Gentleman will see his way to take some steps which will do away with the cause of this constant flooding.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): The hon. and learned Member who has just sat down said that nothing could be simpler than to bring in a Bill to deal with this question. It might be very simple to introduce a Bill; but from my short experience in matters of this sort I think it will be no very simple thing to carry such a Bill.

MR. T. M. HEALY: It would be a non-contentious Bill.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: I would point out to the hon. and learned Member, also, that the reception which has been given to the Ulster Canal and Tyrone Navigation Bill is not altogether such as to encourage the Government to believe that the passage of a Bill in regard to the Bann Navigation would be so simple a matter. With regard to the question itself, I can only endorse what has been already said in answer to Questions which have been put. I do not think, however, that the hon. and learned Member is quite correct in regard to the position of the Lord Lieutenant and the Board of Works and the ratepayers. I think that the ratepayers should make a representation to the Board of Works.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I can show the hon. Gentleman a Memorial 10 fathoms long which was presented to the Lord Lieutenant on the subject.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: I do not dispute that Memorials have been presented on the subject, and I am aware that they have been under consideration. It appears to me that the idea of consolidating the Boards is a very good one; but I may say that I received a lengthened communication this morning from Ireland on the subject, going thoroughly into the whole question, and I can assure hon. Members that I will give it my best consideration. This, however, is but another proof of the present anomalous system of government in Ireland, for while I occupy the position of Financial Secretary to the Treasury I am also called upon to deal with questions concerning the Board of Works, and the longer I hold the position I have the honour to hold the more I see the utter absurdity of our Irish administration in connection with public works. I candidly confess my utter incompetency to perform my duties in relation to these matters. I feel that I am quite unable to stand the criticisms of those who are on the spot, and whose intimate knowledge of local wants and circumstances enables them to come to a right conclusion. I will, however, do my best to promote the interests of all those concerned. It is desirable, of course, that a Drainage Board shall be formed, which shall represent all classes fairly, for the construction of a Board on any other principle would be entirely unsatisfactory. I can only say that the whole matter shall receive my best attention.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I really think that there is now some chance for an improvement being effected in the Office of Works in Ireland, and for this reason. We have had a great many Secretaries to the Treasury in the House; but I believe the hon. Gentleman who at present holds that Office is the first who has publicly recognized the actual situation. The declaration which the right hon. Gentleman has just made is, perhaps, the most important which we have heard for some time. Former Secretaries to the Treasury whom we have heard in this House have talked as if they could speak of Irish affairs by inspiration, for they professed to know more about Ireland than the Irish Members themselves. It is perfectly plain that the Secretary to the Treasury can have no knowledge on these matters, except what he gets from the Irish Board of Works, unless he goes over to Ireland himself. Unless he gives up his control over the £80,000,000 annually required for the service of this country, he cannot perform the duties required of him in connection with Irish public works. That is perfectly clear, because we have a most competent Secretary to the Treasury now, and he acknowledges his inability. There is one thing which I wish to point out, and it is this. Some time ago a Royal Commission was appointed by the Government, composed of myself, the then Member for Tyrone (Mr. Thomas Dickson), then a leading Liberal in the North of Ireland, and the present Member for Mid Armagh (Sir James Corry), and we all reported in opposition to the Government in introducing this Ulster Canal Bill. In reference to this question of the drainage of the Lower Bann, I wish to point out that no Drainage Board can be of the slightest use, unless the farmers along the banks of the river are properly represented. It is not to the interest of the landlord to drain the land, because he cannot get any further profit out of it, and the tenant is not allowed to go upon the Board. Such is the law, and the drainage of the country is in a most deplorable state at present. For three years you have brought in a Drainage Bill, but you have not made the slightest effort to pass it, and the consequence is that there is an enormous amount of water on the land which might be taken off if the tenant were only allowed to form Drainage Boards. This water causes the farmers such an enormous amount of inconvenience, that I am sure they would be ready and willing to form such Boards. This is one of those cases in which a considerable change in the law of Ireland is absolutely necessary. The Board of Works should issue very different Regulations. I am glad, however, that we are in a better position now than we were ever in before with regard to this question. We have had moderately clever Secretaries to the Treasury, and we have had Secretaries to the Treasury who thought they were clever; but now we have a very clever and distinguished one, and he acknowledges that he has not the power to deal with these things. I hope sincerely, therefore, that something will now be done. The drainage of the country is in a most deplorable state, and we see that, wherever drainage works have been carried out, they have proved of the greatest benefit to the country, and the money which has been obtained in respect of them has always been repaid. Unless something can be done to improve the condition of the country at once, then all that is left is for the Secretary to the Treasury to give up the control of these matters, and to send over a Secretary to Ireland, or he should send over a Member of Parliament—an English Member—to look thoroughly into the whole matter. It really requires the presence of a man in Dublin, and a man having power to effect the changes which are necessary. It is one of the greatest physical grievances we have to see the country in this state, when we know that England is willing to advance the money to carry out the necessary works. All that is wanted is a man with power in Dublin—a Minister in Dublin—who would go properly into the whole question, and put it right in a very short time. That is all we want. The whole country in the neighbourhood of a stream is in a state of saturation, and this is allowed to remain so simply because the Secretary to the Treasury cannot attend to the matter. I do hope that something will be done at once in this matter.

MR. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.): I wish to ask the hon. Member what is going to be done in regard to Arklow Harbour? This is really a most important question. I repeatedly brought this matter under the notice of the Government before; but, beyond encouraging answers to my Questions, I am sorry to say that I was unable to get anything satisfactory. The facts of the case are these. The people of the district guaranteed £20,000 towards the cost of improving this harbour; but, owing to the defective plans of the Board of Works, the breakwater was seriously damaged by the first storm that came. It was built upon sand, and went to smash the first time anything in the nature of a storm broke upon it. Well, I brought the matter under the notice of the then Secretary to the Treasury, and the reply I received was that the matter was a very trivial one, and that the damage had already been remedied at a very trifling cost. But what are the real facts? After a great deal of agitation, and a great many Questions in this House, we got a special engineer sent down to inquire into the matter, and with him came another engineer from Dublin, and they made the Report which I hold in my hand. From that Report it appears that another sum of £10,500 will be required to complete the harbour, and from a further Report of the Board of Works it seems that the people will be called upon to guarantee that amount, although the plans that have turned out so great a failure were proceeded with by the Board of Works in the teeth of their opposition. There have been three Papers laid upon the Table of this House—one the Report of the engineer of the Board of Works, whose work was called in question; another from Messrs. Stephenson and Stoney, who were sent to inquire into the matter, and who, I must say, let the Board of Works down very softly; and there was a further Report on Stephenson and Stoney's Report from the Board of Works, which showed a very small amount of gratitude indeed for the mild way in which Messrs. Stephenson and Stoney reported on their blunders. However, there are some other Reports made on the other side of the question. There are the Reports made by the engineer who was employed by the Harbour Authorities, Mr. W. G. Strype, C.E., which are before the Treasury; and I wish to ask the hon. Gentleman if he will have any objection to lay those Reports ont he Table, because they throw considerable light on the subject, and they will enable the House to judge accurately of the merits of the question, of which only one side has yet been shown. I do trust, moreover, the hon. Gentleman will give us some assurance that he will not allow the people of Arklow to be mulcted through the blundering of the Board of Works.

MR. BYRNE (Wicklow, W.): I beg to emphasize the observations which have been made by the hon. Member for East Wicklow, who has for a long series of years taken a very special interest in the question of Arklow Harbour, and done good and valuable work in regard to it; and I hope, therefore, that his appeal will be attended to. I would remind the Committee that the prosperity of the population of Arklow depends upon Arklow Harbour; and, therefore, it is essential that the work of repairing the pier should be done as soon as possible. No doubt, the question of site and direction of the pier was one of some difficulty; but what we complain of is that the Board of Works declined to employ the engineer who so successfully carried out the work at Wicklow Harbour, and who knew the peculiarities of the coast exceedingly well, but employed one who designed and carried out the works in a very shameful way; and, therefore, it is a gross injustice to the population of Arklow to call upon them to repay money which has been wasted, or to guarantee any new loan. They have sufficient burdens already, without being called upon to pay this money, which has been wantonly thrown into the sea. There is not a Member of this Committee who knows the slightest thing about marine engineering who could not have seen at once that these plans were bad. The pier and harbour were so constructed that the pressure of the sea was certain to crush them; but although the pressure is very extreme indeed at Arklow, it was not the pressure which damaged and injured the pier, but it was because the plans did not provide for a proper foundation, and the consequence was that the first small storm—a very small storm—undermined it and washed it away. It is a fact, moreover, that the works were not carried out in full accordance with the plans. The Board of Works Engineer sent in a Report which was so disgraceful that, if it had been sent in by a person in private employ, it would have at once caused him to be sent about his business. It was a misrepresentation altogether. I contend that engineers employed on works in tidal waters should be persons of local experience. It is more necessary that this should be the case in regard to tidal than in regard to smooth waters, for in tidal waters it is necessary to make provision for enabling boats to get to sea in a safe and effective manner. The Board of Works official stated that it would cost £2,000 to carry out the necessary alterations and reparations of the works; but Messrs. Stevenson and Stoney fix the cost at £10,500. The repairs were effected by throwing rubble stones over the side, which will, of course, be washed away by the scour of the first heavy tide that happens at that place. The special Report of Messrs. Stevenson and Stoney admitted that the pier had not been properly extended, and recommended that the work should be done *in situ* or solid block, instead of blocks, which could be washed away. The engineer, Mr. Manning, agrees that that would be an improvement; but the recommendation also is that stones of about 35 cwt. each, such as you have at Kingstown and Holyhead, should be put over the side. However, the stones that have been used have not been of that class. They have only weighed some 10 or 12 cwt. each. There is a quarry accessible to those who direct the works, where the large stones can be got if they so desire. I do not know what the Board of Works contemplates by this operation of putting stones over the side, as so staying or shoring up the work can only serve as a temporary purpose. If they were to drive down piles first and then put down stones of great weight they would obtain the necessary protection for the piers. Then they actually contemplate putting down stones inside the harbour. Should this be done, boats coming in in rough weather will be in danger of getting wrecked. I would point out to the Committee that the livelihood of 3,000 people depends upon this harbour. There are using the harbour a number of large boats which are managed by as able and as hardy a set of men as are to be found in the United Kingdom; and if the harbour gets silted up through bad designing and mismanagement of the works and repairs thereof, these boats will be unable to come in or leave the harbour, and the result will be not only that the livelihood of these people will be affected, but the neighbourhood, the City of Dublin and other places, will be deprived of the fish these boats would bring in. The bad design, execution, and management of this harbour and pier is not only a public grievance, but a public scandal. The Board of Works seem to have no shame on account of their own mistake and the inefficiency of their own officer. They support him, and are going to spend a further sum of £10,500. On what condition are they going to spend it? On condition that the people of Arklow guarantee repayment. First they misapply a large sum, and then come and ask the people of Arklow for more money to give this Mr. Manning a further power of mismanagement. I think the Secretary to the Treasury should give us an assurance that this matter will be looked into carefully, and that the Irish officials will not be permitted to patch up the harbour. I hope he will tell us that some practical engineer will be employed from Hull, or any other place, so long as he is able to deal with tidal waters. Further, I trust he will visit the harbour himself, and not permit himself to be coached by the officers of the Board of Works in Ireland. I am sorry I have had to detain the Committee with this matter; but it is one of great importance to the people of Ireland, and, as is the case in regard to all other affairs affecting that country, the people have waited so long to have their wishes carried out that they have grown tired of waiting. It is really too bad, after all the attention that has been given to this matter in the House, and the amount of money that has been voted upon it, and the way in which the Board of Trade have met this case—and I know what has happened in the past in that respect—that this grievance should continue. The Treasury have done their part by giving this money as freely as they have given it in other cases. It is too bad that this money should be wasted before the eyes of the people of Arklow against their earnest protest. It is well known that a captain who is able to take his ship across the Atlantic is bound to take a pilot before entering a port, not because the captain is not an able seaman, but because the pilot has local experience. In the same way, in regard to these Arklow Harbour works, I maintain that the works being local require to be carried out by someone possessing local knowledge. The Government should send away the men at present employed—the Commissioners of the Board of Works themselves, if necessary—and get better ones in their place.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Some days ago the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister intimated to the House the decided opinion that the Constabulary of Ireland and the Civil Service of Ireland were singular illustrations of the room for that improvement which is to be effected by handing over to the Irish people themselves the administration of their own affairs. Well, I do not know any Department in Ireland which requires more radical reform than that of the Board of Works. It is unquestionable that the action of the Board of Works in the matter of Arklow Harbour has ended in the squandering of public money in a most shameful manner, and that the people of the district are laden with a burden altogether unnecessary, by reason, first of all, of the bad administration of the Board itself; and, secondly, of the incompetence or carelessness of their officers. And not only is this the state of things in regard to the Arklow Harbour, but a similar statement might be made with regard to the other end of the Island. The fishery piers of Donegal are monuments of mismanagement and incompetence. They cost a great deal of money, and a great amount of fuss is made about their erection, and when erected they prove in many cases defective, and in many cases absolutely useless. If we had in Ireland an administration on these matters such as they have in France, if we had a Board of Works as useful, as complete, and as creditable to the country as the French have, judging from some of their drainage works, there would be no reason to complain. The hon. Gentleman has referred to the drainage of the Bann, about which representations have been made to him. But there is also another drainage scheme the Board of Works have been playing with for some time, utterly unable to make up their minds about. It was not until year after year of constant pressure upon them that I myself succeeded in getting them to appoint a Commission in the matter. That Commission has at length reported, and I should be glad to learn from the Secretary to the Treasury what the Government propose to do with regard to the recommendations of that Commission. Hundreds and thousands of pounds have been voted away for public works in England, and enormous sums are given for harbour works on the East Coast of Scotland. These drainage works of the Bann and the Shannon valleys are as important, from an Irish point of view, as these harbour and drainage works in England and Scotland; but we have to sit here and see these large amounts voted away to other communities, without a modicum for ourselves to carry out improvements which are urgently needed in Ireland. I hope the Secretary to the Treasury will give us some assurance that the Government are prepared to jog the activity of the Board of Works in Ireland in regard to these matters. As a matter of minor importance, I would desire to address a question to the Government as to the Civil Service in Ireland generally. We are encouraged to think that, when we are allowed the administration of our own affairs, a considerable reduction may be effected for the good of the country in the expenditure connected with the Civil Service. If that is so, and we are to effect a considerable reduction, and if, at the same time, the existing members of the Civil Service are to have all their vested interests safeguarded, it becomes of importance, from a national point of view, to consider whether any additions which are not absolutely necessary are now being made in the Irish Civil Service. I trust the Government are not filling up any vacancies that it is possible to leave unfilled, because there are an enormous number of posts in Ireland; and the filling up of these, where it can be prevented, would be simply throwing on the Irish Exchequer a burden that it ought not, in any case, to bear. Then, connected with the prospective interests of Irish administration, arises the question of the position of writers and Second Division clerks in Ireland. I presume that if this question is dealt with by the Treasury within any small number of months—and we have been assured over and over again that it is receiving the careful attention of the Treasury Authorities — the resolutions arrived at, whatever they may be, will be extended to Ireland, as well as to England and Scotland. It is, therefore, of importance that we should know what extra charge will be thrown on the Irish resources by reason of any alteration in the *status* or vested interests of these gentlemen. Another point I will urge on the Secretary to the Treasury is this. Over and over again great inconvenience and great loss of public money has been experienced in this country by reason of the non-interchangeability of the Civil Service. Wherever there has been a block of promotion in any important Department re-organization has had to be started, in order to get rid of unnecessary servants, and to cause a good flow of promotion. If, however, a reasonable system of Civil administration had obtained, men unnecessary in one Department would have been transferred to other Departments where there were vacancies, instead of taking new men in those Departments. If any scheme of interchangeability is in contemplation, I hope it will be extended to Ireland as soon as possible, for that will be one of the first measures necessary for us to adopt, in order to effect that reduction which the Treasury itself admits is so reasonable, and ought to have been carried out long ago. I should like to speak of the Vote for the Registrar General's Office, in regard to which I have placed on the Paper a Notice to move a reduction; but it will, perhaps, be fairer to the Chief Secretary if I defer my observations on that until the Vote is taken in the ordinary manner. I hope that in the meantime nothing will be done with the sanction of the Treasury to render any vested interests of a more serious magnitude in that Office than they are at present. But there are two matters that I think ought to receive the attention of the Government at once in connection with the Civil administration in Ireland. One is as to the lunatic asylums. The scandalous overcrowding that takes place in the lunatic asylums in Ireland is a positive disgrace to the Government. Year after year the facts of the case have been pointed out; year after year officials on the Government Bench have admitted the justice of the complaints; and the absurd excuse has been urged that, if in 11 out of 22 lunatic asylums in Ireland there is gross overcrowding, in the other 11 there are a great many vacant places, as if vacancies in one lunatic asylum can be any palliative for the mismanagement which allows overcrowding in others. In the Belfast Lunatic Asylum, according to the last Report, where they have accommodation for 208 lunatics, they have 306; in the Ennis Asylum, whilst the accommodation is only for 130, they have 179 patients; in the Letterkenny Asylum they have 231 male lunatics, with accommodation for only 175; and in the Mullingar Asylum 270 patients are occupying the accommodation intended for 215. This is a positive scandal, and, as I say, it has been pointed out over and over again, and admitted by the Government. I see the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary now in his place. Perhaps he will tell us that something will be done at once to remedy this state of things. Another—and the last point I would touch upon, as the Chief Secretary is in his place—is the condition of the poor at Gweedore. I have received most heartrending accounts of the distress prevailing there. As has been mentioned in this House several times, the Board of Guardians there are practically under the thumb of the local magistrate, who is their chairman, and they have obstinately and systematically refused to give outdoor relief. I have a list of 76 families in one comparatively small portion of the district, none of whom have proper food or the means to obtain it. The Local Government Board Inspector was down there a few days ago. He was taken in tow by the bailiff, who is particularly obnoxious to the people of the neighbourhood, and the houses he visited were those in which he was least likely to find scenes of distress. Every effort has been made by the excellent parish priest of the district to draw the attention of the Government to the terrible state of things that obtains there, and I know for a fact that he has embarrassed himself, parted with all his own means, and burdened himself with debt, in order to relieve his unfortunate parishioners, who are in a state of starvation. So far the Government have not manifested any immediate intention of causing the issue of outdoor relief to these people. I trust that on this subject we shall also receive a satisfactory statement from the Chief Secretary.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): I will not detain the Committee for more than one moment; but I should like to refer back, in a word or two, to the case of Arklow Harbour that the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Donegal (Mr. A. O'Connor) alluded to. I must say that I entirely concur with the hon. Member in his expression of opinion that when the Prime Minister's Local Government Bill became law in no way would it give greater satisfaction to the Irish people, or confer greater advantages upon Ireland, than in its destruction of the Board of Works as it at present exists in that country. Sir, the case of Arklow Harbour is a case of which English and Scotch Members ought to be pretty well tired. Arklow is only a small town, possessing a population, most of whom live by fishing. Some time ago a grant of money was received from the Treasury for the purpose of erecting a harbour to give protection to the fishing part of the population. It may seem to the Committee a very easy thing to build a harbour when the money is forthcoming for it; but such is the blundering and stupidity of the Board of Works in Ireland, that when they got the money they did not spend it properly, according to the view of the people of the district for whose benefit the grant was made. They went on in an erratic course of their own in defiance of the people, and the result has been a demand for a further sum of money for the completion of the harbour. It was at first estimated that it would take £20,000 to fix the harbour up in a satisfactory manner. In commencing the work the Board of Works altogether ignored local opinion. The fishermen who were concerned and were to be most benefited by the harbour gave their opinion as to the particular way in which the pier should be constructed. The Board of Works, however, with systematic persistency, refused to pay the slightest attention to the representation of the officials in Arklow. An attempt was made to induce the Board of Works to engage upon this work a local engineer, who had a thorough knowledge of the coast and of the practical requirements of the place, and who knew what steps were necessary for the satisfactory completion of the harbour; but again the Board of Works, with a persistency which is certainly very hard to understand, because one cannot see the particular reason for it, refused to employ on the work any engineer who had local knowledge or any engineer who had the confidence of the people. What was the result? Why, the harbour was built in a manner contrary to the idea of the people for whom it was intended, the £20,000 originally devoted to the purpose was spent, and after a little time a storm came—by no means a severe one or one that put an unusual strain on the solidity and substantiality of the structure—and the harbour or pier was actually swept away. I myself visited the place in company with the hon. Gentleman who brought the matter before the House, and I can bear testimony to the fact that the work of the engineer of the Board of Works was actually demolished as completely as one could break a matchbox in one's hand. The people of the district, disappointed and disgusted as they were, pointed to the fact that this pier was systematically built in opposition to their wishes, and they said that it was because of that that the failure was so lamentably great. Well, when the Board of Works had blundered once at the commencement by the employment of the wrong engineer, one would have imagined that a set of men who were not altogether steeped up to the eyes in obstinacy and pig-headedness would have given in and would have avoided making another mistake. But no; they desired to repair the damage that their own particular engineer had brought about, and they employed exactly the same person to carry out the repair, and refused to allow a man to be employed who would have the confidence of the people of the district, and would have in his head a knowledge of the locality and what it practically required. As I understand it, the object of bringing this case before the Committee is to get the Secretary to the Treasury to make a statement on what, goodness knows, is not very much to ask—that he will give instructions to the Board of Works to compel them to appoint, along with their own engineer, or in place of their own engineer, if they do not want two, an engineer who will meet with the approbation and the confidence of the people of the town. That is the first thing we ask the Secretary to the Treasury to do, and surely it is not much to ask of him. The next thing we ask is that the people of Arklow shall not be made to pay for the blundering of the Board of Works. Goodness only knows that it is an infliction enough on the people of Ireland to have such an institution as the Board of Works, always blundering and doing things the wrong way, without being called upon to pay for its blunders. It is a great disappointment, and, from a pecuniary point of view, it is a great loss to the people of Arklow that the harbour there was not built properly in the beginning; but they are not only asked to put up with the inconvenience of waiting for the harbour and pier, but they are actually expected to pay the additional sum of money necessary to enable the fishing population to continue their avocation. The original sum was £20,000. The people guaranteed that amount under the impression it would be properly expended. But it was wasted by the Board of Works; it was frittered away, with the result that another £10,500 is required. I ask any English or Scotch Member, is it not monstrous that the people of this district should have to pay £10,500 additional, simply because the engineer in charge of the work was a man who did not know his business? If a proper engineer had been employed from the commencement, in compliance with the desire of the people, the probability is that the £20,000 would have been quite sufficient, that a harbour would have been built so as to suit the fishermen, and the country would have been saved a further expenditure of £10,500. The work is done, and it is no use crying over spilt milk; but it is hard the people should be asked to bear this additional expense which is absolutely caused by the blundering of the engineer of the Board of Works. We ask that the Secretary to the Treasury will give us some assurance that the people shall not be called upon to bear this additional expense which has not been necessitated by any fault of their own.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: I assure the hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. Redmond) that the Treasury will not embark on any further expenditure without the most clear, convincing, independent, and impartial evidence that such expenditure is absolutely necessary. The question is now under consideration. I am not aware of all the facts of the case as stated in the debate this evening, but hon. Gentlemen will not disagree with me when I say there are two sides to this question. There are some local people who object to a double batch of engineers, and this objection we are considering. I am already, as I have intimated to the hon. Member, preparing and selecting Papers which I think should be laid on the Table of the House, and from these Papers hon. Members will be able to see what has been done in this matter from the beginning to the end of the business. I am not competent to say who is right and who is wrong; but I have sufficient authority to say that no more public money will be expended upon the harbour until we are perfectly satisfied that the expenditure is absolutely necessary.

Mr. O'HEA (Donegal, W.): I think the hon. Gentleman has fully justified the question which has been put to him. It is well known that there has been a most prodigal expenditure of public money on works in Ireland. My hon. Friend the Member for North Fermanagh (Mr. W. Redmond) referred to the Board of Works and to the useless enterprizes in which they embark. It has been very properly pointed out that the Board of Works have made public roads in parts of the country where they are utterly unnecessary; some roads have commenced on the sea shore and ended on the top of a mountain, and some have commenced in a bog and ended nowhere. This is evidence of the way public money has been expended in Ireland. The hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury spoke of there being an objection to a double batch of engineers. As a matter of fact, works of utility remain undone from the simplest causes, while the people are suffering from the want of the works. Twenty-five years ago it was decided to erect a pier in the North of Ireland. The work was commenced, but never brought to a completion. The effect is, that the stone and other materials laid down are at present merely an impediment in Donegal Bay. The case of the Arklow Harbour is one which seriously engages the attention of the Irish Members, and we have a right to have every single item in respect of the expenditure properly and fully explained to us. It is satisfactory that the Secretary to the Treasury has given the assurance that no more money will be spent upon this particular project, unless the expenditure is proved to be really necessary. I am sorry, for the sake of many works that have been commenced in Ireland, that such an assurance, and the necessity for giving it, did not occur to the Government long ago. It is satisfactory to receive the assurance which the hon. Gentleman has given us, an assurance which in itself justifies the action taken for some time past by Irish Members in respect to this matter.

General Sir GEORGE BALFOUR (Kincardine): I was very glad to hear the statement of the Secretary to the Treasury in respect to the intention of the Treasury to lay before Parliament a selection of the Papers relating to the Arklow Harbour, because I do not think the people of the locality ought to be called upon to pay any more money towards the carrying out of the harbour works than that already fixed on.

Mr. HARRIS (Galway, E.): I do not think there is any district in Ireland in which the Board of Works have displayed grosser mismanagement than the district I represent. For very many years they have been engaged in works on the River Shannon; but now we find that the river is in a very much worse state than when the Board commenced operations. There has been more money spent in sending Commissioners and engineers down, and in various preliminaries, than would have done the work itself if it had been under the management of an intelligent or an efficient Department. The Board of Works have not confined their operations to the Shannon; they have included its largest tributary, that is, the River Suck. The Division I represent is bounded by the River Shannon and the River Suck. What has been their course of action? They commenced operations 40 or 50 years ago, and at that time the Shannon was simply teeming with fish. The Board set about excavations, destroying the spawning places for the fish, and they erected weirs, with the result that the floods are more frequent and numerous now than ever they were before, and that now it is almost impossible for a man with a day's fishing to get as much as will serve for a dinner. On the banks of the tributaries, and on the banks of the Shannon itself, there were many mills. In the town of Athlone there were, within my memory, three mills. Upon the pretence of doing good, the Board removed these mills, as, indeed, they are gradually removing the mills on the various rivers throughout Ireland, until in the end, I suppose, there will not be a mill left. The system they have pursued is a dual one. As my hon. and learned Friend the Member for South Derry (Mr. T. M. Healy) has remarked, there are the navigation gentlemen advocating one course of action, and there are the drainage gentlemen advocating another course of action, with this result—that between them they are destroying all our fine rivers. This is a great pity, for no country of the same size has finer rivers than Ireland. It is an admitted fact that the Shannon is unequalled by any river in the three countries. As my hon. and learned Friend asked, could not these two departments or agencies be combined? There is nothing in the world to prevent the drainage being carried on in the most effective way by the sluice system; and at the same time it is quite possible also, through the instrumentality of the sluice system, to keep up the navigation. Hon. Gentlemen do not see the point. You have your sluices for drainage purposes, and by their means you can keep up the water until such time as its release will do no injury to the banks or to the various interests on the banks of the rivers. By the present system of excavation, you are doing much more harm to the lower reaches of the river than you do good to the upper parts. Some attempts have been made to reservoir the water. Now, if a system of reservoirs were opened, or the lake system properly improvized, you could utilize your water power, and, by adopting a proper course of irrigation, produce a very good crop of fallow hay—most of the hay in Ireland is fallow hay. Another fact, which may not be known to the Committee and to gentlemen unacquainted with Ireland, is that, owing to the present drainage system, bog gradually steals down to the river's edge; there is a vast increase of waste land in Ireland owing to the simple circumstance that you have adopted an inefficient system of drainage. It is impossible for statistics to show the waste in land which is caused by the circumstance I have described, and by other circumstances, such, for instance, as the removal of our people from mountain and bog lands which formerly they were in the habit of cultivating. If we had in Ireland a proper irrigation and navigation system, if the spawning beds were preserved instead of removed, we should find all the various interests connected with the rivers improving day by day. [*A laugh.*] Hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway laugh. I hear them, night after night, talking about their sporting rights upon land and upon water. If, instead of laughing, they made an endeavour to improve the industries of the country, and to ameliorate the condition of the poor tenants who occupied the land, something might be said in their favour. Unfortunately, however, they only laugh and make long speeches in the effort to sustain themselves and their interests against the right of the people and the rights of justice. I was contending, Mr. Courtney, that the gross mismanagement by the Board of Works, the monstrous way in which they have acted in regard to the rivers in Ireland, is in itself sufficient to condemn the government of Ireland, or as to the government of any one country being carried out by another country. The Board of Works have the House of Commons and the English people behind them, and those who complain of this mismanagement are hopelessly trying to get redress from this House. The House of Commons are too far away, and they have too much to do; they are like Atlas—they have the world on their shoulders. They are too immovable; and when our poor people want to get some especial benefit for their country they are flooded with officials, and it is utterly impossible to get redress from the House of Commons. Our applications are always neglected. There is so much red-tapeism and roundaboutism, if I may use the expression, that the people are hopeless and in despair. As civilization advances, the tendency is to give greater power to local departments, and, above all, to put those local departments under the popular will of the people, without which no good results will follow. The landlords of Ireland are simply destroying the industries of the country. There is a Western part in Ireland which is teeming with fish. They come in day after day on the shore, and the boats and the nets which should catch them have been swallowed up in rent by the landlords. The charity which comes from America is swallowed up by the rent to the landlords. The profits which are made out of sea-weed are swallowed up in rent.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. Gentleman to confine his remarks to the Vote before the Committee, which refers to the Civil Service in Ireland.

MR. HARRIS: I am sorry I have trespassed from the subject. I would not have done so had it not been for the interruptions above the Gangway. I wish to draw the attention of the Committee to the want of piers on the Western Coast of Ireland. There is one circumstance connected with piers which has not been put before the Committee. It is connected with the very high tides we have on the Western Coast. At low tide the fish in shoals come in the numerous bays by which the Western Coast is indented. The people are perhaps up in the fields engaged in agricultural work. They hear that the fish have come in; they rush down to the shore to put out their boats; but while they are dragging the boats along the strand, the fish go away. [*A laugh.*] Hon. Gentlemen laugh, but I am stating what I know to be an absolute fact. It is a fact which I myself have witnessed. If there had been a pier, and the people had had nothing to do but to step into the boats, they could, no doubt, have made large hauls. There is another very important matter connected with the want of piers on the Western Coast. The deep sea fisheries of Ireland are just as valuable as the shore fisheries, but there are no means of communication for the larger class of boats. The want of piers along the Western Coast is very detrimental to the interests of the people who live in that region. There are very many other points connected with the mistakes and blunders of the Board of Works, and of the English Government, which I would like to touch upon, but I do not like to delay the Committee. I know very well there are other Gentlemen who wish to speak, and, therefore, it is not for me to detain the Committee; but there is one point I must mention. It is this, that the works the Board of Works have done are badly done. Many works have been allowed to decay and to become entirely useless for the want of proper supervision. It seems to be nobody's business to look after works in a continuous and intelligent way; the result is, that where a small effort is made one day it is entirely nullified by neglect the next day. Things are going from bad to worse every day in Ireland. While prices were high, while rents were high, while everything seemed to be moving onwards, nothing was done to improve the country. Now a change has taken place; rents are going down, everything is declining, and, of course, when the authorities did nothing in the good times, it is hard to say they will anything it in the bad times. The want of continuous supervision on the part of the Board of Works is very injurious even to what they have done, which is very little; but I hope that when we get a Government of our own, when Irishmen are able to exert their own intelligence, and to remedy whatever evils affect their country, when we can do that without being incumbered by officialism from this country, or anywhere else, I hope to see a great improvement.

MR. P. McDONALD (Sligo, N.): It is well known to all my hon. Friends around me that Ireland is the most Board-governed country in the world. We are not governed directly by the English Government, but by a number of Boards, some of which do not even admit responsibility. We have, amongst others, the Board of Education, the Board of Works, the Local Government Board, the Irish Lights Board, and the Fishery Board. Each and all of them are bad in their own way; but the worst of all, I am sorry to say, is the Board of Works. One would imagine that these Boards would try to perform the duty assigned to them by the English Government, or to do the work which Ireland has a right to expect from them; but their sole effort seems to be how not to do the work required of them. The worst of all, in the non-fulfilment of their duties, are the Board of Works; of all the Irish Boards, the Board of Works, in my opinion, are the most incompetent. Sir, I am old enough to remember a good many works which have been begun, but not finished, by the Board of Works. My hon. Friend the Member for West Donegal (Mr. O'Hea) has drawn a picture of the unfinished works which have not been completed, and I can bear my testimony that this incompleteness is owing to the want of competence on the part of the Board of Works, or their determination "not to do it." I know a road which was struck out in my native county 30 years ago; it was to pass through a district where a road was particularly needed, inasmuch as, if it had been constructed, it would have shortened the way by four miles out of nine. That road was opened at both ends, but the middle of it has remained up to the present time incomplete. Who is accountable for that? Why, the Board of Works, as they are accountable for many shortcomings in Ireland that are now afflicting the people. Again, in a locality in which I lived for 15 years, there was another road which I remember to have seen during seven years of that time—half the roadway being cut to a depth of six or seven feet, and the other half left in its original condition, dangerous to the passengers, an impediment to the traffic, and generally, I may say, a public nuisance. The cases, Sir, which I have cited are only typical of the state of things existing in Ireland. Wherever the Board of Works have laid their hands, they seem to have got hold of the work for the purpose of not carrying it to completion. One of my hon. Friends has referred to the flooding of rivers in Ireland in consequence of the navigation system and the manner in which the Board of Works have carried out the drainage works intrusted to them. I have seen the Shannon flooded winter after winter; and I witnessed a most remarkable instance of that flooding on one occasion. It was on a roadway near Drumshambo, and the Shannon had flooded the adjacent land to a distance of three-quarters of a mile on either side; a number of poor people were coming home from market and found the way impassable; they had to wait until they were taken up by some kind-hearted carriers, whose horses were obliged to wade through the water; darkness was coming on, and the drivers were unable to find their way; and, had it not been that some of the passengers whom they had taken up pulled out a box of matches, they would not have been able to pilot themselves through the flooded highways. That, Sir, is a clear and remarkable instance of incapacity and do-nothingness of the Board of Works; and, as I have already said, it is only one case out of many. There is a system of red-tapeism prevailing, not merely in the Office of the Board of Works, and all the appendages thereto, but that is a system which prevails in every Public Department in Dublin at the present day. I know an instance in another county—the county of Cavan—where an Inspector was sent down to visit a church and to report on some work for the Vestry. A report had been sent by the Rector as to the state of the church, and what was necessary to be done to put it in repair, and a workman was sent to do the small job necessary for that purpose. But that would not suit the Board of Works, who insisted on sending down an Inspector at great expense; and by the time he came back and made his report, it must have cost 20 times as much, probably, as it would have cost had the recommendation of the Rector been acted upon. In connection with every petty work that has to be done this kind of do-nothingness prevails; and I am aware, or, rather, I have been informed, that there is a large staff of officials connected with the Office of the Board of Works who are exceedingly well paid for the little they have to do, which consists of reading the newspapers during one part of the day and spending the rest of it in paring their nails—that is the work in which the greater number of officials in Dublin seem to be engaged in—while the work of the country is left undone, and the taxpayers of the country have to bear their share of the expense. One of my hon. Friends has made use of an expression which will bear repetition—namely, that the Board of Works seems to be nothing more than a buffer between the Treasury and the Irish people. The Irish people have been day by day complaining of the delays and the annoyances caused by the shortcomings of the Board of Works. When a work of necessity and pressing importance has to be done in Ireland, there must be a roundabout application to the Board of Works; they will send down an Inspector to report; his report will be taken into consideration, and then the Board will, very probably, reject the application which calls for the most pressing attention, and in their wisdom they may perhaps carry into execution a piece of work which is not at all necessary, because I believe their mode of action may be described mainly as not doing that which is necessary and doing what is not necessary. In these circumstances, I trust that the Office of the Board of Works in Dublin may undergo a complete and entire reform and reorganization; and until you effect that reform and reorganization you will not get that Department, slow and inactive as it is, even to bestir themselves in the smallest degree, but they will jog on at the old rate, and leave the country still calling out for the improvements of which it stands in need. I say that complete reorganization is necessary, or what perhaps is best of all, that they should be cleared out bag and baggage, and replaced by other officials with a thoroughly competent man at their head. You have had, I believe, a Colonel at the head of the Board, and I am not quite sure that an Admiral has not occupied that position—at any rate, you have placed at its head anybody and everybody who ought not to have been there. My friends in Sligo have been calling out for years for the improvement of their harbour, and I hesitate to help them in drawing attention to it as long as the matter is likely to be referred to the Board of Works, because I know that if they have anything to do with the matter, that it will be left undone. For these reasons, I consider that the Board of Works calls for the entire disapproval of every one of my hon. Friends sitting on these Benches, and I trust the reorganization which is necessary will be speedily effected.

MR. BARRY (Wexford, S.): Everyone who has sat in this House for any length of time must have heard continually statements as to the incompetency of the Irish Board of Works. It is a striking fact that, in spite of the specific cases brought forward showing gross mismanagement, great waste of time and public money, no attempt has been made, and nothing has been done, to improve the system. I am not going to refer to any past mismanagement or past expenditure of public money now; but I rise especially with the view of directing the attention of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury to some present and future expenditure. In the county of Wexford a grant was obtained to extend the pier at Kilmore under the Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for Carlow (Mr. J. A. Blake) which was passed in 1884. In order to secure the grant it was necessary that a quota of one-fourth should be raised locally. There was considerable difficulty in raising that quota, because the people in the district had no confidence whatever in the engineer of the Board of Works carrying out the undertaking, and an intolerable waste of time has taken place. But a new work is about to be started, and—if I may ask the attention of the Secretary to the Treasury for one minute—I ask that he will undertake that some better and more competent authority than the engineer of the Board of Works will be consulted before the work is carried out; otherwise, I am very much afraid that when the work is completed we shall have a similar state of things as that which occurred at Arklow, where the pier has been rendered absolutely useless, in consequence of the way in which the engineer carried out the work. There was a small pier built in the county of Wexford, some time ago, under the direction of the Board of Works; it was pointed out that the work would not endure the storms that were frequent there. I know the district well, and I am sorry to say all my anticipations were realized with regard to it, because when the first storm came the pier was washed away, and the work became absolutely useless. Now, in view of the fact that a sum of £125,000 has yet to be expended under the Act, and is in course of being expended, I think it highly desirable that the Secretary to the Treasury should see that some competent engineering authority undertakes that the work shall be of a character likely to last. By a great many instances on the North and South Coast of Ireland which have occurred during the last few years, it can be proved that the piers built under the direction of the Board of Works' engineers are not likely to endure. The action of the Board in this matter has led already to a considerable expenditure, and, I am sorry to say, considerable waste of public money; and as the hon. Gentleman has been good enough to promise that no further expenditure will take place on the Arklow works without the attention of competent authorities being directed to the work, I shall be greatly relieved, not only with regard to the works to be carried on in my county, but also with regard to those in Ireland generally, if he will extend that principle and see that proper professional advice is given in all cases before the works are carried out. There is another point in connection with the Civil Service Estimates to which I should like for a few moments to call the attention of the Committee and the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury. It has reference to the Board of National Education. I wish to point to a proceeding on the part of the Commissioners of National Education, Ireland, which, in my opinion, forms a grave scandal, and has resulted in serious educational loss in the district interested. Some years ago, in the parish of Ballyminty, Wexford, it was resolved to carry out a school under the management of a mistress and several experienced masters; for a long time the masters and mistress were engaged in the work of education, and for a period matters went on well enough; the mistress, however, got married and still retained her office; in course of time there was a family, and frequent interruptions took place in the course of teaching, and it is hardly necessary to point out that the interests of education became neglected, and a great deal of dissatisfaction arose in consequence. That dissatisfaction found expression about two years ago; a Memorial was sent to the Educational Commissioners in Dublin, requesting that a schoolmaster should be appointed, and setting forth the reasons in clear and strong language. The Commissioners did not send any reply; a second Memorial was sent with a similar result. At that time the attendance at the school had dwindled down to a very small number—that is to say, from 110 to 25—and the people, who were anxious to secure the education of their children, themselves engaged a schoolmaster and established him in the old school. Within a month of the establishment of this school the average attendance reached 54, and a third attempt was made under the direction of a local priest—a third Memorial was sent to Dublin. To this Memorial an answer was received from the Education Commissioners to the effect that no grant would be made to the master because the school was "Boycotted." Well, Sir, that was a remarkable conclusion, and the people were at a loss to understand how it could have been arrived at. At last it was evident that the husband of the schoolmistress had taken an unpopular part in the election of a Guardian, and, in consequence, the Commissioners came to the conclusion that the school had been "Boycotted" for political reasons. They ignored the reasons laid down by the people of the place in the Memorial as to the unfitness of the schoolmistress to carry on the business of the school, and their whole action, and the justification of their action, was based on the alleged fact that the school was "Boycotted;" and, therefore, they would not make a grant to pay the master. I am not going to discuss the action of the Board; but I may be permitted to say that I hold it to be no part of the duties of the Commissioners of National Education to undertake police work in Ireland; it is no part of their work to enter into political discussion or to assign political reasons for their action in dealing with a matter of a purely educational character. The facts which I have stated were brought before me last year, and I am certain that they represent the truth of the case. I waited on the Commissioners in Dublin, and they promised to go again into the question. After some time I received an answer that they still held to the opinion that the school was "Boycotted," and that, therefore, they refused to make the grant. I then brought the circumstances before the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, who ordered an inquiry into the whole matter; that inquiry was held two or three weeks ago by the Chief Inspector of Schools, and the result of the inquiry is to the effect that the application for the grant was ordered by the Commissioners not to be entertained. It will be understood by the Committee that the Commissioners of Education have entirely abandoned their original ground as to the school being "Boycotted," and that they now submit the reason that the legal number of attendances would not be reached. I am entirely at a loss to understand how the Commissioners and their Head Inspector arrived at this conclusion; and since the receipt of the letter I took the trouble to get a Return showing the number of children eligible for school, and I found there were 79 boys and 54 girls, in all 133. For the last two years the National school has been in receipt of State aid, although the attendance has been lower than that required by law, in direct contravention of which the National Education Commissioners have been acting. The attendance at the temporary school is averaging now, and has done for the last 18 months, 54, and that under considerable disadvantages, because they have none of the books, maps, or other school accessories which the other schools possess. In directing the attention of the Committee and the right hon. Gentleman to this subject, I wish to point out the serious educational loss which the action of the Commissioners is causing. In the first place, parents have no strong inducement to send their children to school in the absence of the ordinary facilities; the school attended by 54 children is badly equipped, and not in a position to give the amount of education to be had at primary schools in England. The position taken up by the Commissioners appears to me utterly untenable; and I trust that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland will not allow the matter to remain where they have left it. It is a scandal that the Board of National Education, which ought to be moved by educational instincts, should deliberately stand in the way of the district in the matter of the education of 123 children. At the same time, this is but a fair example of the manner of action adopted by Public Boards in Ireland. I shall not on this occasion make any general attack on the Public Boards in Ireland; but I beg the right hon. Gentleman to give this matter his attention, and not permit the vital interests of a number of children to be sacrificed owing to the extraordinary conclusion arrived at by the Commissioners of Education in Ireland.

Mr. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's): Before the Committee leaves the subject of the Board of Works I wish to make a few remarks. It is well known that the Irish Board of Works have under their control a variety of subjects of great interest, and of the utmost importance to the people of Ireland. They have under their administration the works connected with drainage and piers and harbours, as well as tenants' improvements, artizans' dwellings, and many other matters; and, that being so, it will be evident that the way in which the Board administers its functions must result either in great advantage or disadvantage to the people of Ireland. After what we have heard to-night I think the Committee will be satisfied that the verdict in Ireland is that disadvantage has resulted. Parliament passes Acts for the purpose of improving the condition of the people, and the administration of these Acts of Parliament is intrusted to the Irish Public Works Department. When those Acts are first passed they are put away on a shelf and nothing is done to make the public acquainted with them; but when someone has the temerity to apply to have them put in operation, they are turned upside down and inside out to see in what manner they can be obstructed. I think that when the Statute Book is examined into we shall find that there are a great many of these Acts, which took this House a good deal of time and trouble to pass, which have been rendered wholly inoperative, owing to the fact that they have not been carried out by this Department in the way in which Parliament intended that they should be carried out. A great deal has been said about the manner in which the Board carries out works in Ireland. While I do not entirely agree with the sweeping condemnations of my Colleagues on these Benches, I must say that, on the whole, they have been fairly justified by the facts. It is a well-known maxim in Ireland that if a man sees a road that leads from nowhere to nowhere, the explanation is that it is "a Board of Works' road." For a very long period we had a Chairman of the Board of Works in Ireland, a gentleman named Colonel M'Kerlie, whose name was often before this House, but never with any approval. Well, that gentleman was known to be an obstructionist to the work of the Board to an extent which came to be a public scandal, and for that he received an unusually large pension, and was made a K.C.B. The present Chairman took office, I believe, with the very best intentions; but the traditions of the Office were too strong for him—the atmosphere of the place and its influence were too strong for him—and he has been unable to struggle against those influences, and things go on there as they ever did before. I have had some experience of being before the Board of Works in its legal capacity, and I believe that there is more red-tapeism and obstruction taking place there than in any other Department. In reference to another matter which has been brought before the Committee I wish to ask one question. It is with regard to the contracts which are given away by the Board of Works for furniture and floor-cloths. This matter has been raised in this House by Questions on several occasions, but the answers of the Government have never been satisfactory. The facts are these, that although these contracts are supposed to be given away upon tenders, a great many of the largest items are not included in the contract at all. The furniture for all the Public Offices in Ireland, and for the Castle, the Vice Regal Lodge, and the Chief Secretary's Lodge, is provided through the Board of Works, and this furniture, although presumably obtained under contract, is purchased by one of the clerks without any contract at all. The greatest favouritism is shown in the purchase of it, and the favourites are not found amongst those holding National opinions; but, on the contrary, orders are given to men who are notorious for their public offensiveness to the Catholic religion. There is one other question to which I wish to refer—namely, to the Registration of Deeds Office in Ireland; and I would take this opportunity of calling the attention of the Financial Secretary to the Treasury to the Notice which I have put upon the Paper, relating to the Report of the Committee which was appointed to inquire into the Registry of Deeds in Ireland. The Financial Secretary has intimated to me that the Report is confidential, and could not be given; but I hope he will reconsider the matter. The result of the Report of that Committee was that the Treasury issued a Minute, dated 29th January last, dealing with one part of the subject. But, Sir, the Report also contains various suggestions as to the classification of the records, and I should like to know if these suggestions have been acted upon? The Report also refers to the registration of land; and seeing that that is a very important question in the Land Purchase Bill which the Prime Minister has introduced, I think that it would not be unimportant if the information contained in the Report I have referred to were supplied to the House.

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork, W.): I rise, Sir, for the purpose of giving another illustration of the incompetency of the Board of Works in Ireland. I wish to direct the attention of the Committee to the pier which was erected some years ago at Cape Clear, at a cost of £4,000, which was partly paid for by the people of the district, but which is altogether useless to the people of Cape Clear. I would point out that, that work having been erected, it is a great hardship to the poor fishermen about the district to have to take their mackerel boats several miles to Baltimore, to find a place of safety where they can haul them up on the beach, owing to the incompetency of the engineers who erected the pier. What I would ask is, that the Secretary to the Treasury should give some assurance that some small expenditure will be authorized on this work, so as to enable these poor people to avoid the necessity of taking their boats miles away in order to haul them up on the beach in safety. There is another question to which I should like to call attention—namely, the way in which stipendiary magistrates perform their duties in Ireland, and I wish particularly to draw attention to the case of Mr. Morgan, the Resident Magistrate at Bantry. I put a Question to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary as to the granting of licences to carry arms in this place, and the answer which I received, and which, I suppose, came from Mr. Morgan himself, was totally adverse to the truth. The facts of the case were these. Tim Murphy and Dennis Murphy were charged with shooting at a man named Cottill—Dennis with shooting, and Tim with inciting his brother to shoot. They were returned for trial, and while they were awaiting the Assizes I had an assurance from Mr. Morgan that the arms taken away from the Murphys would not be returned to them; but what do I find? I find that Mr. Warburton and Mr. Cronin, two local magistrates, have signed a certificate enabling the Murphys to get licences to possess themselves with arms, and the two guns which I was assured would not be returned—at any rate, until after the trial—have been returned. Then, again, Sir, these Murphys, on another recent occasion, have fired at other people in the neighbourhood; and when the right hon. Gentleman was questioned upon the subject, his answer—which, I presume, was supplied to him by the Local Authorities—was that the police had no such information. Well, what are the facts of that matter? A man named Lynch went to Mr. Frizell, one of the magistrates, and complained that Dennis Murphy had pointed a revolver at him, and told him that he would shoot him only he did not wish to get his name in the papers. Mr. Frizell asked Mr. Lynch if he would make an information on the subject, and he said that he would; but the Chief Secretary now states that the Government have no information on the matter. What I complain of is, that the Resident Magistrate is completely in the hands of the local magistrates, and after he had promised me that the two guns would not be given up, he was overridden by the local magistrates. What I ask is that, whenever a case of this kind arises, the Government should send down another stipendiary magistrate to hear the case with Mr. Warburton, and to assist Mr. Warburton, who is a weak man, to perform his duties in a judicial and proper manner. In another case, a Mr. Ryan was brought before the local magistrate for firing at a man named John Connolly; and although two witnesses positively swore that they saw him shoot at Connolly, the case was dismissed against him, because he happened to belong to the same Party as the magistrates.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I wish to ask you, Mr. Chairman, if this is in Order?

The CHAIRMAN called upon Mr. Gilhooly to continue his address.

Mr. GILHOOLY: As I was saying, although a *primâ facie* case had been made out against Ryan, he was dismissed; but if he had been a poor peasant, he would most assuredly have been sent to the Assizes. In conclusion, I should like to warn the right hon. Gentleman against the Reports which he receives upon these cases from the local officials of Ireland, and I trust the matters I have mentioned will receive his earnest consideration.

Mr. CRILLY (Mayo, N.): I desire to make an appeal to the Secretary to the Treasury and the Chief Secretary for Ireland, who, during the present Administration, have shown such a striking interest in Irish affairs. The nature of my remarks will be rather in the form of an appeal, although the matter which I have to refer to comes within this item with reference to the Board of Works. There is at present existing a very large degree of distress in the West of Ireland, and two of the Unions scheduled under the Relief of Distress (Ireland) Act are the Belmullet and the Swineford Unions. Well, Sir, as the Representative of the Unions lying between those Unions, I desire to call attention to the condition of the River Moy, which runs between the two scheduled Unions. The question which I desire to call attention to is the deepening of the River Moy. Quite recently, the Commissioners of Ballina endeavoured to have an interview with the Lord Lieutenant (the Earl of Aberdeen); but he refused to receive them, on the ground that his Predecessor (the Earl of Carnarvon) had refused to accede to the request of a similar deputation, and he found that there was no fresh ground which would warrant this present demand. Well, Sir, I wish to point out that the Committee which sat in 1884 reported that the question of deepening the River Moy was a very important one, and everyone who is familiar with the West of Ireland knows that the River Moy is the chief water highway to Sligo and Ballina, which are two of the most important towns in the West of Ireland. Now, a loan of £3,000 was made to the town of Ballina by the Board of Works in Ireland some time ago; but, unfortunately, owing to the distress which has prevailed, they have not been able to pay back a large portion of it, and the desire of the Commissioners and the people of Ballina is that the Treasury should be as merciful as they can possibly be under the circumstances, and, notwithstanding the amount still unpaid, should lend them sufficient money to carry out this work of deepening the Moy. The result of that would be this—that besides greatly improving the town of Ballina itself, by making the river navigable, you would give a large amount of employment to the people in the surrounding neighbourhood, who are in an almost starving condition. I would, therefore, ask the Secretary to the Treasury if it would not be possible, on the security which can be afforded by the income of the Commissioners, which I understand is something like £300 or £400 a-year, and on their property, to advance them a loan on easy terms to enable them to complete these works and to give employment to these poor people, who, unfortunately, are not scheduled in the Relief Act which the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary was good enough and humane enough to introduce into this House? I would only ask him to consider any application which may come from this quarter to save the people from the starvation which at present threatens them.

Mr. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford): The hon. Member who has just sat down has made an appeal to the right hon. Gentleman opposite, and I will make another to him in reference to the Arms Bill; and, to put myself in Order, I will conclude with a Motion. I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman what steps he proposes to take to bring that measure before the House? The discussion which we have just been listening to——

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member will not be in Order in discussing that question.

Mr. BRODRICK: I move to report Progress.

The CHAIRMAN: Quite so; but the hon. Member will not be in Order in pursuing the line he indicates.

Mr. BRODRICK: I wish to report Progress; and my reason is that an important Order stands on the Paper as the second Order of the Day. I wish to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland what steps he proposes to take to give the House an opportunity of discussing the Committee stage of the Arms Bill? And, seeing that the Bill has been put down for to-night in order that it may pass before the present Act expires on the 1st of June, and that unless he can bring the matter before the House at the present Sitting this is the last day before Thursday on which it can be placed first on the Paper as a Government Order, I think I am justified in the course I am taking. I should also like to ask what steps the right hon. Gentleman intends to take to induce the House to believe that all the talking which has wasted so much of the time of the House to-night has not gone on with the connivance of Her Majesty's Government?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is strictly speaking in Order in showing the necessity of bringing on another Order of the Day on a Motion to report Progress; but he is not in Order in entering into the line of argument which he is now pursuing.

Mr. BRODRICK: I wish to urge upon the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary as my reason for moving to report Progress that the Business of the Government has not progressed this evening as might have been expected. I do not think I shall be out of Order or very far wrong in expressing my opinion that the speeches recently made have rather overstepped the limits of discussion. If the same order of speaking that has been going on for so many hours is continued, I do not see, and I do not believe, that any other hon. Member can see any chance of bringing this debate to a close to-night—unless there is some arrangement for doing so with the Government, and of which we have no knowledge—and of bringing on the next Order. Under these circumstances, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman if he is in earnest in desiring to pass the Arms Bill? And, if he is, I would urge upon him the necessity of reporting Progress in order to bring on that important matter, which, upon his own confession, cannot be allowed to slide, but must be dealt with within the next three days or the Act cannot be renewed before it expires. Hon. Members below the Gangway seem desirous of bringing a great number of subjects to the notice of the House at this particular moment, with what object I cannot tell unless it is to fill up the evening in order to preclude any other discussion, and I trust they have not the sanction of the Chief Secretary in so doing. [*Cries of* "Order!"] If I am not in Order I shall stand corrected by the Chair; but I shall not stand corrected because hon. Gentlemen who have had their innings this evening object to my remarks. I sincerely trust that the right hon. Gentleman will explain to the Committee under what circumstances he proposes to redeem the pledge he has given to the House in regard to the Arms Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Brodrick.*)

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. JOHN MORLEY) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I think the hon. Gentleman has very considerably overstepped the limits of debate, and has almost put himself out of his right to ask for an explanation by the exceedingly gratuitous insinuation that what has taken place to-night, which, as far as I know, has been in Order, has been done with the connivance of Her Majesty's Government. I beg most emphatically to repudiate any imputation of that kind. Why should the Government be a party to the postponement of the Arms Bill? I would remind the hon. Member that I put down the Bill for the first Monday when the House reassembled after the Easter Recess, and the delay in the progress of it is wholly and absolutely due to the action of two hon. Members sitting on the Benches opposite, who put down a block against it. But for that circumstance the Arms Bill would have been in the House of Lords four or five days ago. [*Ironical cheers.*] What I say, in spite of the cheers of the hon. Member for Sheffield (Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett), is perfectly and unanswerably true. During the whole of that week there was no opposition to the Arms Bill, except the block of the two hon. Members who sit on the opposite Benches.

An hon. MEMBER: Someone else might have blocked it if those blocks had been removed.

MR. JOHN MORLEY: It was not for me to provide against all imaginable contingencies. All I know is that the opposition of those two hon. Members prevented the Bill from being in the House of Lords three or four days ago. The hon. Member opposite asks me a question which it is practically impossible for me to answer. He asks me to explain how the Bill is to be sent up to the House of Lords so that it may receive Her Majesty's assent before the 1st of June. I declare I do not know. It is taken out of my power. All I know is that I have left no stone unturned in order to get the Bill advanced. It is no fault of mine that it has not been advanced, and as to the delay to-night, it is quite as disagreeable to me as it is to any Gentleman sitting opposite.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I will not dwell on the question whether the scene to-night, which I think we can perfectly well understand, is or is not due to the connivance of Her Majesty's Government; but of this I am sure, that if Her Majesty's Government had not found it necessary to put down this Vote on Account to-night, we should have been spared the waste of time that has taken place. [*Cries of* "No!" *from the Irish Nationalist Members.*] And of this also I feel pretty certain, that if Her Majesty's Government had but done their best to keep a House on a certain Friday night when effective Supply was on the Paper, and would have been reached within a very few minutes, instead of themselves encouraging a "count out," there would have been no need to take this Vote on Account to-night. Whether that was connivance or not, I do not trouble to inquire. With regard to the Arms Bill, I should just like to say that although it is true that hon. Gentlemen behind me, as I think not very wisely, blocked that measure, yet I do not know why Her Majesty's Government, when they might have had the time of the House, if they had chosen to ask for it, did not place the Bill early on the Paper, as they have endeavoured to do now, so that it might be considered in spite of the block placed against it. It is very strange, Sir, that no sooner did the block of the hon. Members behind me disappear, than blocks came from the opposite quarter of the House. If any hon. Member of this House is to blame for the Bill being so delayed, it is the right hon. Gentleman himself, because, when it was blocked before, he did not attempt to press it on for consideration, but delayed it night after night, until we have now arrived at a time when it cannot become law, so far as he knows, before the end of the month. I hope my hon. Friend will not press his Motion to report Progress, because, as far as I can see, it would not lead to a satisfactory result. I hope also that after the extraordinary discussion that has taken place, which is in remarkable contrast with the few words that were spoken on the last Vote on Account, about six weeks ago, we may be permitted to take these Votes to-night, and thus do some Business on an evening which, so far, has been very much wasted.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt) (Derby): I entirely concur in the desire of the right hon. Gentleman to do some Business to-night; but I do not think the tone of recrimination he has adopted is likely to conduce to that result. As far as the right hon. Gentleman charges the Government with "connivance," I have only to repudiate altogether a word which is not particularly complimentary in its character. I do not wish to speak offensively; but when you charge a man with "connivance," you charge him with something which you consider to be a reproach. No doubt, the hon. Member for Surrey (Mr. Brodrick) intended to be offensive. The hon. Gentleman generally does desire to be so, and as a rule he succeeds in that object. What has been the course taken with regard to this Vote on Account? It is not denied that a Vote on Account is necessary. How did the proceedings this evening begin? With whom did the waste of time commence? It came from a distinguished ally of the right hon. Gentleman—the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands)—and was supported by another ally—my hon. Friend the Member for Northumberland (Mr. A. Grey). If there has been connivance and a deliberate plan for wasting the time of the Committee, I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Burnley on his success in putting off the discussion on the Irish Bill. I do not remember a more deliberate waste of time than the discussion which took place early in the evening. No doubt, when you have a subject upon which you can get an adverse vote against the Government, and when you can damage them by discussion, such a discussion is no waste of time. The Committee has been engaged three hours—from half-past 4 o'clock till dinner time—on a Motion which the hon. Member who proposed it has tried to escape from carrying to a division, being prevented only by the merriment of hon. Members from walking out of the House. And that was not a waste of time! When anyone discusses a subject that does not serve any useful purpose, that is not connivance of this kind! If there has been any connivance at all, I should say that the principal connivers were the hon. Members for Burnley (Mr. Rylands), Northumberland (Mr. A. Grey), and Bury (Sir Henry James). We got from them various interesting disquisitions on several subjects that were singularly unfruitful in their character. I do not complain of it; but I wish to point out that if the right hon. Gentleman chooses to enter on the game of recrimination, he will find it is one at which two people can play; and I hope the right hon. Gentleman, if he wishes some further Business to be done, will abstain from comments of that kind.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): In reply to the extremely offensive remarks on the part of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, directed at the Party with whom I have the honour to act, I wish to say one or two words. He not only attributes obstruction to the Government, but he accuses us of entering into a combination with the Government to obstruct. He says there has been "connivance." To show how far that accusation is warranted by the facts, and how little we anticipated that there would be a prolonged discussion upon these Votes, I may say that, earlier in the evening, I was asked how long the discussion would last, and made answer that we should be on the Arms Bill by half-past 9 o'clock. Nothing can be more untrue than that there has been between the Irish Members and the Government any such accommodation as that alleged by the right hon. Gentleman. The Committee must not forget that, at the beginning of the Sitting, three hours of our time were consumed by hon. Gentlemen who have no connection with Ireland whatever, and that the discussion they originated was a thoroughly dishonest one, not meant for the purpose of forwarding Business, but to serve a very discreditable Party object. I defy any hon. Member to say that any of the remarks which have been made by hon. Members from Ireland—however much it may be thought that too much time was taken up by them—were not addressed to thoroughly practical subjects. It may be that some hon. Members may think that time is so pressing that these subjects ought to have been held over; but no one can say that they were not perfectly pertinent to the Votes in Supply, and had not reference to subjects which, in ordinary years, would have been discussed at much greater length. Therefore, I consider the charges which have been made against the Irish Members as entirely and grossly unfounded and extremely offensive. I have been here for a long time waiting to speak upon a subject in which I take great interest, which I had an opportunity of addressing the House upon five years ago, but which I have not been able to raise since.

Sir R. ASSHETON CROSS (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt) does not often throw oil upon troubled waters, and he certainly has not done so tonight. But I am surprised at his stating that the debate which took place at an earlier period of the evening was unfruitful. I was very much of the opinion that the subject should be postponed rather than that we should come to a division upon it; but I was surprised to hear from the right hon. Gentleman that the debate brought forth no fruit. As a matter of fact, it had the effect of eliciting from the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister a positive assurance that the subject in debate should be carefully inquired into by him. It was entirely owing to what came from the Prime Minister that the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands) was content to withdraw his Motion. I do not, therefore, think that his withdrawal should now be thrown in his teeth. It is clear to me that we have got some fruit out of the debate. I agree, however, that it is now time we began to do real Business, and I trust hon. Members will not continue discursive observations on the items of the Votes.

Sir ROBERT FOWLER (London): I had not the advantage of being in the House at an early period of the evening. I only arrived at half-past 7 o'clock, when I was told there had been a division nearly half-an-hour before; therefore, it cannot be right for the right hon. Gentleman to say that the debate initiated by the hon. Member for Burnley occupied three hours. I understand that of the time the Sitting has occupied the Prime Minister took up half-an-hour before the debate I have referred to began by abusing my humble self. My only object in rising is to point out that the statement of the right hon. Gentleman, that the debate on the Motion of the hon. Member for Burnley occupied three hours, was inaccurate.

Sir JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.): I think it is not quite fair to attack the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Rylands) in his absence. The hon. Member brought forward a Motion on the subject of the Secret Service money. The Prime Minister made a statement which to many of us was satisfactory, and I, with others, urged the hon. Member, in consequence of that statement, to withdraw his Motion. Therefore, the hon. Member for Burnley is not to blame, and those who thought that the statement and the promise of the right hon. Gentleman were satisfactory were to blame, if anyone was. ["Oh, oh!"] Hon. Members may cry "Oh!" but, in any case, the matter was one of considerable importance; and the hon. Gentleman who last spoke in the debate said that if it were not for this special occasion he should be one of the first to vote against Secret Service money. I think the hon. Member for Burnley did right in withdrawing his Motion.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): With regard to the statement which has come from the opposite Bench, that we should have availed ourselves of a previous opportunity of taking a debate on these Votes, and that in that way we should have made progress and would have rendered it unnecessary to take these discussions to-night, I can only say that greater progress has been made with Supply this year than has been made for a great many years past. Irrespective of the Votes we shall obtain to-night, we have already obtained 47 Votes in Supply on the Civil Service Estimates. There is no precedent for such a number of Votes being obtained, I will not say before the 31st of May, but before the 31st of June, for the past seven years. Greater progress has been made this year than was made in an equal period during the whole of the last Parliament; therefore, I do not think than any blame attaches to the Government in the matter of slowness of obtaining Supply.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I can only attribute the fact referred to by the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down to the patriotic and forbearing character of the Opposition. But my charge against Her Majesty's Government is that they not only did not prevent the "count out" on that Friday, but deliberately encouraged it—on that Friday when they were within a few minutes of reaching that effective Supply which they had on the Paper, and when they might, as we who know the customs of the House are well aware, have got a very large sum in Supply if they had gone on with it. That was a dereliction of duty which I warned the hon. Gentleman at the time I should remind him of. If it had not been for that dereliction of duty, this Vote on Account would have been obtained.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT) (Derby): Will the right hon. Gentleman state how many Members of that "forbearing and patriotic Opposition" contributed towards keeping the House on that Friday night?

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: Yes, I will. There were no Members present below the Gangway on this side, so far as I can recollect. ["Oh!" *from the Irish Nationalists.*] There were 39 Members altogether in the House. There were four Members on the Front Ministerial Bench, though several Members of the Government were in the Lobbies. There were 10 Members in all on the Government side of the House, and the remaining 29 were on this side.

COLONEL WALROND (Devon, N.E., Tiverton): I can corroborate the right hon. Baronet's statement, and would bear witness to the fact that on the occasion referred to the Government were trying to "count out" the House.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): We are accustomed to bold statements from Leaders of the Tory Party. I was not present on the memorable occasion referred to, therefore am not able either to corroborate or deny the statement just made. But there was another statement made a short time before, on the subject-matter of which I have some knowledge, and that was the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition in reply to the observations of the Secretary to the Treasury as to the speed with which the Votes in Supply had been got through this Session. I understood him to hint at a remarkable cessation of opposition on the part of Irish Members to the Votes in Supply. Well, I think the reason of the rapid advance which has been made with the Business of Supply is to be found in another direction altogether. I think obstruction has served its purpose by the promotion of the Members of the Fourth Party.

MR. BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford): As the hour (12.30 A.M.) has passed at which the object I aimed at could have been attained, I beg leave to withdraw my Motion.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Question is, "That the Motion be, by leave, withdrawn." [*Cries of* "No, no!"]

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): The hon Member who last spoke says he has not achieved his object. I say he has achieved it. What was going on when he interposed was this. We were having a comfortable practical discussion on Irish affairs, which is a thing we very rarely have. We were discussing such subjects as harbours, drainage, and railroads—subjects which may not very much interest the British public, but which we Irish Members take a deep interest in—and were doing it in our own humble way. We were satisfied to bring our complaints before the Secretary to the Treasury, and were directing his attention to the subjects to which I have referred, when a great number of ex-Ministers, including five ex-Cabinet Ministers, came down. They wanted to talk about something; so the hon. Member for Surrey (Mr. Brodrick) gets up and moves to report Progress—a Motion upon which hon. Members can talk about anything. They begin to abuse the Government—they always do that, of course. They mention "counts out," and no doubt they are justified in doing so, for when they were in Office they were continually accused of bringing on "counts out;" so now, naturally enough, they endeavour to turn the tables. I congratulate the hon. Member for Surrey, and assure him that he has achieved his object.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question again proposed.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I wish to allude briefly to the question of the violation of telegrams which took place on a wholesale scale in the Isle of Skye. ["Order!"]

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I have some remarks to make with regard to the Irish Registrar General's Office, which stands before the item upon which the hon. Member for Glasgow wishes to speak.

The CHAIRMAN called upon Mr. Chance.

Mr. CHANCE: I cannot allow this item of £2,000 to pass without saying something upon it. I see that the Registrar General's Office is constituted of the Registrar General and clerks of three classes. These clerks take priority according to their seniority. Class 1 has seniority over Class 2, and Class 2 has seniority over Class 3. I see that they paid Stamp Duty on their appointments, as appointments which in the ordinary course of promotion became worth £500 a-year, but which will not be the case under the re-organization. But some months ago, without public inquiry or any notice whatsoever, the Registrar General proceeded to reorganize the staff, which reorganization received the consent of the Treasury. The effect of this reorganization was to promote a number of the Registrar General's especial favourites, giving them increased salaries and increased rights, and taking away the priority that Class 2 possessed over Class 3. A portion of the Minute authorized the establishment of a fresh class, including members of both the previous classes, ranged alphabetically instead of according to seniority. A Question was asked about this some months ago, and the answer which was returned was that nothing would be done until the House had had an opportunity of discussing the matter. Unfortunately, something has been done. Some of the gentlemen who have been benefited by this scheme have already received their salaries under it. I think that is an unfortunate circumstance. I think no possible justification exists for this alteration. I do not expect to hear the slightest justification for it; but there is one objection which may be raised to any interference with the scheme, which is that it has been authorized by the Lord Lieutenant. But it seems to me that that is the very worst answer which could possibly be given. I do not suppose the Lord Lieutenant is infallible. I know both the noble Earl and his Chief Secretary are actuated by the best motives; but I do not suppose they desire to elevate a a Minute of the Treasury, passed without the slightest public inquiry at the request of a single Government official, into one of those immutable laws impossible to alter. I shall move a reduction in this Vote, or to strike out the whole amount, unless I can get some assurance from the right hon. Gentleman that this matter will be looked into, and that further proceedings in the scheme authorized by this Minute will be stopped until we have had an opportunity of discussing the subject.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. John Morley) (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I am afraid I cannot give the hon. Member any further assurance than that which I have already given. I must say it is in the highest degree inconvenient to discuss a question of this kind on a Vote on Account instead of on the specific Vote. When the proper time comes for discussing this matter, I think we shall be able to give a very good account of what has been done. It is useless now to ask us to prevent anything more being done, because action under the scheme of reorganization has already, to a considerable extent, taken place. I believe that when the time comes, and the Vote is taken and discussed, we shall be able to make such a statement as will satisfy even the hon. Member.

MR. CHANCE: I do not quite gather the meaning of the right hon. Gentleman's reply. If there is no possibility of interfering with the arrangements which are now being carried out in this Office on some future day, when we come to consider the matter we shall find that vested rights have been created, and that the power of doing anything has slipped out of the hands of the Committee. I do ask the Committee to put its foot down on this occasion, and to show that it is stronger than a single official. There was no possible necessity for this re-organization, unless it was to deprive a number of lower clerks of the rights for which they bargained and entered the Service, and to provide a number of upper clerks, pets of the Registrar General, with increased salaries and rights with a view to the future prospects of the Government of Ireland Bill. Some gentlemen under this scheme get an increase to their salaries of as much as £100 a-year with increased rights; and that will be, when the Irish Government Bill passes, at the expense of the Irish public. I now move that the total Vote be reduced by £2,000, the amount of this item for the Registrar General's Office.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Item of £2,000 (Registrar General, Ireland), be omitted from the proposed Vote."—(*Mr. Chance.*)

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): I think we have some reason to complain that the engagement entered into by the right hon. Gentleman some time since in regard to these matters was not carried out. When a Question was addressed to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary on this question some time ago, he undertook that the scheme of re-organization should not proceed until some opportunity had been given for further inquiry. What my hon. Friend complains of is that, though that assurance was given to the House, this scheme of re-organization did proceed behind the back of the House, as it were, and behind the backs of those who were interested in the Lower Division clerks. I have before me a list of changes that have been made by this new scheme. The Secretary, who received a salary of £600 a-year under the old scheme, still retains the position of Secretary, but at present at a salary of £800 a-year. There was a Superintendent in the Office with a salary of £450 a-year; but under the scheme of re-organization he now receives a salary of £500. Passing to the first-class clerks we find that their salaries are the same now as they were before the scheme of re-organization. The second-class clerks are altogether abolished. A few of them who were in the Service have been compulsorily retired; but, practically, the second class has been abolished, and by the abolition of the second-class clerks you practically bar the way to the promotion of the third-class clerks. In this way men are done out of what they hoped to obtain when they entered the Service—namely, the chance of rising to the best positions that the Service offered. By this scheme of re-organization all the higher officials, who already have what would be considered very good salaries, are to have those salaries increased. The third-class clerks, who are now shut out from promotion, have the same salaries as they had before. In addition to having no improvement conferred upon them by this scheme, they find themselves altogether shut out of rising to higher positions in the Service because of the power which is given to the Department of taking on new men over their heads. I think we have a right to complain that while an engagement was given to us that this scheme of re-organization should not proceed, behind the back of the Chief Secretary himself, in all probability, the Irish officials have followed the system they have been accustomed for so long to follow, the Registrar General having taken the matter into his own hands.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (MR. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): I should be sorry if there were a misunderstanding in this matter, or any appearance of the Government wishing to depart from the undertaking they entered into. I gave a pledge that this scheme of re-organization should not be finally approved and put into practice until the House had had an opportunity of discussing it, and to that pledge I still adhere. The real difficulty is the unwisdom of discussing the items of Votes on one general Vote on Account. All these questions will have to come up again, and that means a second opportunity for discussion during the Session. What my right hon. Friend has said for himself I also say. I have received no information from Ireland to enable me to discuss this question to the satisfaction of the Committee. But I know enough to dispute the accuracy of some of the statements which have just been made. I do not think the changes which have been made involve increased expenditure, and I do not think the chances of promotion have been interfered with. But I am not in a position to prove this. No doubt, when the full Vote for this Service comes before us, and we are not on a merely temporary Vote to enable the Government to carry on Business for a month, then either my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland or myself, if we are in Office at that time, will be able to justify the action of the Treasury with regard to this scheme. We literally adhere to the old scheme. The new scheme of reorganization remains unsanctioned until the House has had an opportunity of discussing it.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): As I was really the first to raise this question, I think I am justified in expressing gratification at the distinct pledge which the Secretary to the Treasury has now given. It was in reply to a Question of mine that he gave a somewhat hesitating answer on a previous occasion. While the hon. Member was giving it the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary entered the House and conveyed to the Secretary to the Treasury something or other that induced him to give an answer that I understood to be the same answer that we have just heard; and after that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary was good enough to communicate with me, and give me to understand that he had been altogether acting under a misapprehension. Well, the circumstances were unfortunate; but I wish it to be clearly understood that I am perfectly satisfied that the Chief Secretary acted throughout with unquestionable *bona fides*. I am perfectly sure that he said exactly what he intended, and if he found afterwards that the circumstances were not as he imagined them to be he was not to blame in the matter. But the Secretary to the Treasury has said that when the full Vote comes up for discussion he will be prepared to show that there has been no increase in this Vote. I am quite prepared to admit that he will be able to show that. The figures of the total are the same as they were before; but under this simple appearance one of the grossest jobs ever perpetrated in the Civil Service lies hidden. The fact is that the juniors in the Office have been swindled in the interests of certain higher-placed officials. The Vote is not distributed as it was before. The position, *status*, and interests of the juniors are all sacrificed, whilst the *status* and pay of those in higher positions have been considerably enhanced. The whole thing was a job, and I say so all the more because it was said in the House that the salary of the Secretary would not be increased; but that is precisely what has been increased. I have two or three other points to raise. I agree that this is not a convenient opportunity for the discussion of this Vote. I do not think it could be conveniently discussed and threshed out now. I would ask my hon. Friend not to press his Motion on this occasion, because I think that while it might not do good it might prejudice useful discussion when next the Vote is brought before us. We shall have, I think, on the next occasion to proceed to a division.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): I would point out that in my judgment the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury is misled if he imagines that because there is no increase in this particular Estimate therefore no job has been perpetrated. We are standing up for the rights of the lower class clerks who have been deprived of seniority and promotion by a trick—or perhaps I should say by the device which enables a reduction to be effected in the general Estimate, which gives increased salaries to the gentlemen in the higher positions in the Office, and reduces the chance of promotion of the unfortunate lower class clerks. For my own part, I do not know an atom about the politics or anything else concerning these clerks, higher or lower. I simply stand by the representations that have been made to us by the clerks, who are deprived of their standing and seniority, whilst gentlemen high in office get increased salaries, and the Department gets credit for reducing the entire Estimate. I think my hon, Friend has acted wisely in bringing the matter forward, and that the Secretary to the Treasury will not be misled by an apparent decrease in the Vote.

MR. DWYER GRAY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green): I think this is not a convenient opportunity for this discussion. If I understand the pledge of the right hon. Gentleman, it is not only that the scheme shall not be confirmed until an opportunity is given for discussion, but that the position of the officials shall not be prejudiced. It has been the custom to superannuate two or three—at least two of them. We have been told that the scheme is to be subject to consideration and discussion, and, of course, decision, in this House; and when we find that a portion of it has been actually carried out, and some of these clerks have been driven from office, we are in a difficulty. Are we to understand that if the scheme is not confirmed these gentlemen who have been dismissed will be reinstated? If not, it appears to me to be a species of Jedburgh justice—first we execute them, and then put them on their trial. The clerks who are prejudiced by the scheme have not been heard with regard to it; they were not asked for an opinion; they were not told what was going to be done. When they appealed they had certain papers submitted to them. They have been driven from their appointments without its being suggested that they were not competent to do their work; they have been driven out under a scheme which they are told is to be considered two or three months hence. That is a most extraordinary position of affairs. It is a very hard thing for these unfortunate men, who find their prospects in life completely blasted, to be told that the scheme will be considered by-and-bye. And, in the end, even if it is condemned, we shall be told, I suppose, that, because they have been superannuated, it is impossible to afford them any relief.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): I too, on the whole, must express satisfaction with the statement of the right hon. Gentleman. I know perfectly well that it is the feeling of these clerks that if their case had been properly represented this injustice would not have been allowed to proceed. We all have so much confidence in the right hon. Gentleman, and so firm a faith in his fairness, that we are confident he would not have permitted this scheme to proceed if the case had been properly represented to him. The position of the clerks in the meantime, however, is most disagreeable. The second class seems to have been abolished; the senior division of the third class seems to have been compulsorily retired. It is a singular thing that in re-organizing this Office the Government have proceeded upon a different principle to that adopted in connection with other Offices where re-organization has taken place. When the Office of Registrar of Deeds was re-organized—and that was the last Office of this kind that was re-organized in Ireland—all the third-class clerks were raised to the *status* of second-class clerks. In the present instance, however, the second-class clerks have been abolished, and though some of the clerks in that class may have been retained their salaries remain the same. And there is this additional grievance imposed upon them—that the Registrar General has power to fill the higher appointments over their heads by appointments of his own. These are the facts that are represented to us by the officials who are interested; and they themselves say that if the right hon. Gentleman in charge of this Department had known the circumstances of their case, and if they had had an opportunity of properly approaching him, he would never have allowed the injustice of which they complain to occur.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): If I understand the Financial Secretary to the Treasury aright he has given a distinct pledge that no future steps will be taken in connection with this scheme until the House has had an opportunity of discussing the matter and coming to a decision. If I understand that to be his pledge, then I shall be happy to withdraw my Motion.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER) (Wolverhampton, E.): That is not the pledge I gave. It was that the scheme of re-organization should not be finally binding until the House has had an opportunity of discussing it. So far as the Treasury is concerned, it will not be approved until then.

MR. CHANCE: I think that is a satisfactory pledge, and I have no doubt it will be carried out in the spirit in which it is given.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. MAURICE HEALY (Cork): On the Vote for the Post Office, I desire to call the attention of the Financial Secretary to the Treasury to a grievance under which the Post Office officials have been labouring for some time past. In Cork, I am informed, the Post Office is classed as a first-class Office, similar in every respect to the Offices in the cities of Dublin and Belfast. The sorters and other clerks are paid on exactly the same scale as they are in Dublin and Belfast. But though the clerks and sorters are in that position, the humbler *employés* in the Cork Office are put in the position of postmen at a second-class office. The salary of a postman in Dublin is 28*s.* per week, in Belfast it is 26*s.*, and in Cork it is only 22*s.* Although the Cork men only receive 22*s.*, there is not the smallest reduction in the amount of work they have to do. In fact, they have this disadvantage to face—that in addition to having to perform all the work of postmen in Dublin and Belfast they have a Sunday delivery every Sunday in the year. In Belfast there is no Sunday delivery, and in Dublin the postmen have some arrangement by which they are called upon to deliver on Sundays only once every four weeks. In addition to that these officers complain that, whereas in Dublin and Belfast postmen are eligible for promotion to higher positions on vacancies arising, in Cork there is no such arrangement. In Dublin and Belfast, when a vacancy arises in the position of sorter, or in a superior division in the Office, I understand an examination is held; and if any postmen present themselves at that examination and prove themselves qualified they are perfectly eligible to get the higher position, and I need not say that an arrangement of that kind is a direct incentive to good conduct, and to a better discharge of their duties as postmen. In Cork, however, no such arrangement exists. I am not informed that there is any special reason why an exception should be made in the case of Cork—why the Office in Cork should not in that respect be put on the footing of the other Offices. They have a third grievance, and it is that, whilst postmen in other Offices when sick receive three-fourths of their pay if single, and their full pay if married, in Cork they only receive half-pay. I do not know why an anomaly of that kind should be permitted to exist. I am informed that there are no special circumstances which should justify an anomaly of the kind; and I would respectfully ask, if the hon. Gentleman satisfies himself that it exists, that he should do whatever in him lies to remove it. I understand that the hon. Gentleman, in reply to the hon. Member for North Cork (Mr. Flynn), has justified the deficiency in the scale of pay by saying that it is the duty of Post Office Authorities, in fixing the rate of wages in the localities, to consider the ordinary rate at which labour is paid in those localities. I do not complain of such inquiries being made; but I think, at the same time, it is the duty of the Post Office not to grind down men to the lowest possible penny, and put them on what may be called starvation wages, but to see that a fair day's pay is awarded for a fair day's work. I respectfully ask the attention of the hon. Gentleman to the points I have indicated, and I would press upon him the necessity and the common justice of redressing the grievances of that class of officers, that hard-working and industrious class of officers, to whom I have referred.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): Not having the details of this matter before me, I am not prepared to meet the case which the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. M. Healy) has stated. Of course, a great deal can be said in favour of the view which the hon. Member has taken, and I can assure him that there is no desire on the part of the Post Office Authorities to grind any man down; indeed, I am quite satisfied that the usual practice is to give fair wages for the work done. When the Post Office Vote is before the Committee we shall be in a position to discuss the matter fully; but at present, as I have already pointed out, we have simply a Vote on Account before us which it is necessary we should take to meet the requirements of the Civil Service.

Mr. MAURICE HEALY: I beg to inform the hon. Gentleman that I shall call attention to this subject when the Vote comes on in the usual course.

Mr. LANE (Cork Co., E.): I wish to point out to the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury that the question which my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. M. Healy) has raised is not one of detail, and therefore I do not regard the answer of the hon. Gentleman as quite satisfactory. My hon. Friend has pointed out that the Cork Post Office has hitherto been recognized as a first-class Office, and he has asked the hon. Gentleman whether he will recognize that principle? I am quite sure my hon. Friend does not want the Secretary to the Treasury to make any special pledges; but, as I have said, he asks him to recognize the fact that the Cork Post Office is a first-class Office, and that all in the Office shall receive remuneration on the scale which obtains in offices of that class. That is all that my hon. Friend has asked; and I think that the Secretary to the Treasury might say that the matter shall receive attention.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I wish to call attention to a question, which this afternoon was the subject of inquiry on my part, addressed to the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury. When the Government took over the telegraphs of the country, the House was very jealous to make provision for guarding the secrecy of telegrams. The Electric Telegraph Act, 1868, Section 20, provided that any person having official duties connected with the Post Office who should, contrary to certain conditions contained in the Act, disclose, or in any way make known the contents, or any part of the contents, of any message or messages intrusted to the Postmaster General for transmission, should be guilty of a misdemeanour, and should be subject to very heavy penalties. Now, I complain that the provisions of that Act appear to have been disregarded in the most wholesale manner by the Postal Authorities, and other authorities in the Highlands of Scotland.

CAPTAIN VERNEY (Bucks, N., Buckingham): I rise to Order. Do the observations of the hon. Gentleman take precedence of Votes in Class VI.?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes; unless the hon. and gallant Gentleman wishes to move a reduction on Class VI.

CAPTAIN VERNEY: We have been over almost every conceivable subject in reference to Ireland this evening, and I think it is not too much to ask the attention of the Committee to the outrageous job perpetrated in Wales on the part of the Board of Works. There is in Wales the Shrewsbury and Holyhead road, a Government road, made for the purpose of facilitating the march of troops, with the most estimable and desirable object of keeping down the Irish rebels; it was maintained at the Government expense——

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W): Mr. Courtney, I rise to Order. I wish to ask on which item of Class VI. it is competent to the hon. and gallant Member to discuss the Menai Bridge?

CAPTAIN VERNEY: On the Superannuation and Allowance Vote to Engineers of the Bridge.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. and gallant Gentleman will not be in Order in discussing the road. He must confine his observations to the discussion of the item for superannuation of the engineer.

CAPTAIN VERNEY: Then, Sir, I will point out to the Committee that the engineer in charge of the road has been awarded a pension for life of £160 a-year. He was awarded that pension because when the road, which, as I have said, was a Government road, was handed over to the counties, his office ceased, and he was superannuated by the Board of Works. I have no objection at all to any deserving officer serving the country receiving a good pension. I received a pension myself. As I have said, the award to this officer was £160 a-year; he was 54 years of age, and had 22 years' Service. This officer, who had had charge of the road during 22 years, kept it in a state so bad and so deplorable, and, on the whole, manifested such utter incompetence for the work he had performed, that his conduct was the subject of animadversion throughout the counties through which the road passes. Now, the County Surveyor of Carnarvonshire, reporting on this road, said that when the road was placed under the charge of the officer I am referring to it was a convex road; and that, when it was handed over to the counties, he found by actual measurement that the centre of the road was 5, 6, and 9 inches below the level of the gutters; and it is for this that the engineer has been pensioned. I find in the evidence given before the Select Committee that Colonel West stated that the condition of the road was so scandalous that it was impossible to drive along it. I find, also, that one surveyor stated that it was in such a bad condition that it would cost £152 a-mile to put it in order. I find, also, these words in a Report now before the House of Commons—

> "That the road will be irretrievably ruined, owing to the carelessness, the ignorance, or the incompetence of those whose duty it has been to see the road duly maintained."

["Question, Question!"] I do not think anyone can say I am not speaking to the point. The Committee is asked to pay the engineer a pension on account of work which he did not do. The Report also says—

> "We urgently recommend that not a moment should be lost in representing strongly to those in authority that the management of the road should no longer be left in the hopelessly incompetent hands to which it is at present intrusted, whose culpable negligence is a disgrace to the Department which employs them, and would not be tolerated for a day in any servant of this county (Anglesey)."

And yet we are asked to vote for this incompetent officer a pension for life of £160 a-year. But that is not all—the duties of this officer extended all the way from Shrewsbury to Holyhead; and, therefore, part of his duty lay in maintaining a portion of the Menai Bridge itself, concerning which I have asked the Secretary to the Treasury several questions, the answers which he returned to them being received with the greatest dissatisfaction in the counties interested. This road was handed over to the counties; but that is not the case with the bridge. The bridge remains in the hands of the Government; and, therefore, the work of this officer, so far as the bridge is concerned, was not superseded. He has been pensioned as if his work had been abolished; but it was not abolished, because part of it remains in the hands of the Government; and the Government have voted £50 to another engineer to look after the bridge. In order to prove what I have said, I hold in my hand the Chairman's Report; and I point out that the bridge is being repaired with stones and macadam, instead of asphalte, which was originally put on the roadway.

An hon. MEMBER: Mr. Courtney, I submit that the hon. and gallant Gentleman is no longer confining himself to the subject of the superannuation allowance of the engineer, but is going into other matters contrary to your ruling.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. and gallant Gentleman is travelling over a rather wider area than he is entitled to.

CAPTAIN VERNEY: Then, Sir, I will conclude by moving the reduction of this Vote by the sum of £160, for superannuation allowance to an incompetent man, which I regard as one of those jobs which ought to be brought before the House of Commons.

Motion made, and Question,

> "That the Item of £20,000, for Superannuation and Retired Allowances, be reduced by the sum of £160."—(*Captain Verney*,)

—put, and *negatived.*

Original Question again proposed.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I was saying, when the hon. and gallant Gentleman rose to move the Amendment which has just been negatived, that it was extremely necessary to insure the secrecy of telegrams, and I was quoting the Act bearing on that subject, which is most explicit and most stringent. During the disturbed state of things in the Island of Skye, the authorities thought it necessary to make certain inquiries into what took place there. Now, I do not intend to make a charge on account of inquiries that were considered necessary in the interests of law and order; but I protest against those inquiries being made by officials in violation of the law. The law has provided that although the secrecy of telegrams shall, under ordinary circumstances, be maintained, if a case comes before the Home Secretary which satisfies him of the necessity of so doing, he may make an order for the production of a telegram, or, if he refuse to do so, the question may be brought before a Court, who can require the telegram to be produced. That surely affords sufficient facilities for getting at any telegrams that it may be necessary, in the interests of law and order, to make public; but I complain that the officials, without any of these formalities having been gone through, have violated the secrecy of telegrams in the most flagrant manner. On a former occasion I brought a complaint before the House as to the sworn information brought against Sheriff Ivory, of having gone into the Post Office and threatened the man in charge, in order to get information as to the telegrams received there. Sheriff Ivory denied the truth of the charges brought against him, and the Lord Advocate accepted his statement. That matter has already been before the House, and I did not propose to go into it again; but within the last few days Sheriff Ivory has thought fit to violate all the traditions of the position which he holds, and published a Report of the information taken at the secret inquiry, as well as correspondence which the Lord Advocate tells us he should have considered confidential. In this Report Sheriff Ivory gives the details of information sworn before him, which, among other things, shows the systematic violation of the secrecy of telegrams of which I complain. I quote from the Question which I put to-day to the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury. One of the witnesses examined by Sheriff Ivory, Deputy Chief Constable Aitchison, said that when Mr. Mahon, a Post Office official, came he sent for the Inspector and himself, and they met him then and on several occasions afterwards; that on those occasions he showed them various telegrams, for some of which he had applied to Sheriff Spens for authority to show, but that he had also shown them several telegrams before he got that authority; that a day or two afterwards he came with a bundle of telegrams; that he (Aitchison) asked Mr. Mahon for a copy of the telegrams. Another witness said that Mr. Mahon produced a batch of 20 or 30 telegrams and showed the contents to him. Not only were copies taken, but a whole series of telegrams are given to the world. To show the mischief of this, a constituent of mine, a reporter in Glasgow, had one of the telegrams addressed to him; and Sheriff Ivory, taking him for someone else, denounced him as "one of the leaders in the revolution in Skye." He denounced, also, the postmaster as one of the leaders of rebellion. Sir, there is here a double violation of secrecy; first by the Post Office officials, and then by the official into whose hands these telegrams were given. The telegrams were, by Sheriff Ivory, laid before the Commissioners of Supply of Inverness-shire, in the first instance, and then, through the Press, became public property. In concluding my remarks upon this subject, I say that if you are going to administer law in a disturbed district it is necessary that it should be administered in an orderly fashion, with an even hand; and, above all things, it is necessary that it should be done with due regard to the provisions of Acts of Parliament. I refuse to be content with the answer I have received to-day, and in order that the Committee may pronounce an opinion on the importance of preserving the secrecy of telegrams for which this House has made provision, I beg to move the reduction of this Vote by the sum of £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Item of £120,000, for the Post Office Telegraph, be reduced by the sum of £100."—(*Dr. Cameron.*)

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR) (Clackmannan, &c.): I do not suppose that anyone will differ in opinion as to the impropriety of violating the secrecy of telegrams. This is a subject with respect to which an answer was given to-day by the Secretary to the Treasury. The circumstances arose out of the unhappy condition of affairs in Skye. It appears that there was reason to believe that two postmasters in Skye had been mingling themselves with practices which were illegal, if not criminal, and that with a view of pursuing inquiry the Post Office Authorities sent down a gentleman to investigate the circumstances, and in his intercourse with the police who gave him information it seems that he showed certain telegrams. Now, whether this was a breach of the Electric Telegraphs Act is a question which I do not go into; but I think, when it is considered that the gentleman in question was pursuing this delicate inquiry, everyone will feel that if he committed any error at all it was of the most venial character, and that there was not on his part the slightest intention to violate the secrecy of telegrams. That seems to me to be the whole of the matter, and my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury has stated that technically what had been done by Mr. Mahon was not within the rule, but that officially his superiors were satisfied that he had no evil intention. It is difficult to see how he could have carried out the kind of inquiry he was directed to conduct without showing the telegrams to the police who could assist him. In that lies the explanation of the whole affair which seems to imply a slur upon

Mr. Mahon, but of whose intention, as I have said, his superiors are perfectly satisfied.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): If the right hon. and learned Gentleman studies the case he will see that Sheriff Ivory has not stated it accurately. According to Sheriff Ivory the account is that permission was telegraphed for to Edinburgh, but refused. These are the circumstances. A man was sent down to do certain work; he broke the law; he was told by his superior officers not to do it; but he did it notwithstanding. Well, Sir, I think that the thanks of the Committee are due to the hon. Member for Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) for referring to this matter. We have here the case of a Post Office official sent down to do certain work, and contrary to his instructions breaking the law; we have the unique case of a man breaking the law who ought to have set the example of preserving it, and we have an account of the affair given by the Lord Advocate, who seems to be the advocate of all these law-breakers. It is clear that the right hon. and learned Gentleman is quite prepared to support the breaking of these Acts by the Sheriffs. How does this matter stand? We say that this official who was sent down to Skye disobeyed his instructions, and that he has committed criminal acts for which he ought to be sent to prison for two years, and ought to forfeit his salary. It seems to me that the Sheriffs of Scotland do not know much of the law which they have to administer, and Sheriff Ivory tells the Commissioners that upon grounds of ignorance these persons broke the law. A question of fact arises, and we have on one hand the statement of the Sheriff, and on the other statements of the postmaster, telegraph clerk, and two gentlemen who were present at the time. The Sheriff comes into the office to bully the postmaster's clerk, in order to compel him to aid and abet him in breaking the law; two gentlemen are present; they see the illegal action of the Sheriff, and make affidavits relating to the crime which the Sheriff has committed; but the Lord Advocate passes over all this. I ask the Lord Advocate if he will institute a full inquiry into the conduct of Sheriff Ivory, or bring a charge of perjury against the postmaster and the clerk? I trust that, at any rate, the matter will not be allowed to remain in its present position. I think the explanation given by the Lord Advocate is eminently unsatisfactory, inasmuch as it is quite contrary to the statement made by the Sheriff, and I trust my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow will divide the Committee on his Motion.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) (Wolverhampton, E.): Perhaps the Committee will allow me to repeat what I have said several times this evening, that the Vote before us is a Vote on Account. I may also point out that even the salary which is the subject of the reduction moved by the hon. Member for Glasgow is not included in this Vote, and that the proper time to raise the question of the conduct of the officials would be when the Post Office Vote is taken. But if that be objected to on the ground of technicality, I say that on the ground of fairness the matter ought not to have been brought up this evening. Although Mr. Mahon has acted unadvisedly he has not, it seems to me, acted with a bad intention; and I think that if anyone intends to challenge his intention, Notice should be given in order that the House, having all the facts before it, may judge for itself and act fairly. No one regards more than I the importance of the sanctity of telegrams; but I submit that this is not the time to raise the question, and I hope that when the Post Office Vote comes forward the hon. Member for Glasgow will put down a Notice with reference to this matter, and the House will then have an opportunity of exercising its judgment upon it. It would seem that the authorities at Skye put pressure on Mr. Mahon which they ought not to have done. I do not want to shield Mr. Mahon, who may have done an act for which he ought to be visited with a large reduction of salary; but, on the other hand, I do not want to condemn him unheard.

Dr. CAMERON: The telegrams are published in Sheriff Ivory's Report, and thus you have a double violation of the law.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: We are not responsible for that.

Dr. CAMERON: I do not say you are responsible, but the servants of the Post Office have violated the secrecy of telegrams in one direction, and another official has violated it in another, with the result that the telegrams have been made public. I put down a detailed Question on this subject a fortnight ago. I postponed it for a week, and there has been ample time to answer it. If my hon. Friend is not in a position to answer it I regret it much; and, at the same time, I point out that the same sort of thing will always occur so long as the Postmaster General is not a Member of this House. It is thought unnecessary to have the Postmaster General in the House of Commons, and the consequence is we are debarred from obtaining information about a Department which the House of Commons is, perhaps, more intimately connected with than any other. I did not understand the Secretary to the Treasury to say that Mr. Mahon had been even reprimanded.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: There was an expression of disapproval on the part of his superiors.

Dr. CAMERON: Well, Sir, I am not satisfied, and with all deference to the opinion of my hon. Friend I feel it my duty to divide the Committee on this question.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 54; Noes 116: Majority 62.—(Div. List, No. 105.)

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Some time ago I asked a very simple Question of the Government; but I am sorry to say I failed to get an answer to it. It was in regard to the policy of the Government in relation to the Civil Service in Ireland. It is perfectly notorious that there has been a scandalous extravagance in connection with the Irish Civil Service, and it is also notorious that a great number of officials are feathering their nests as quickly as possible, or, in other words, vested interests are being established at once. They are filling whatever vacancies there may happen to exist at present, and where they do not exist they are creating vested interests which will eventually be thrown upon the Irish Exchequer. I would therefore ask the Government if they are preparing to abstain from filling up vacancies in the Civil Service, because otherwise they will be throwing on the Irish Exchequer burdens which, in addition to being unnecessary, are exceedingly grievous, by establishing vested interests which we shall never be able to disregard, and which will hang like a millstone round our necks.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir William Harcourt) (Derby): If the hon. Member will allow me to say so, it appears to me that the question is a little premature, and I think we had better wait until we can see our way a little further ahead in this matter. It is quite impossible to answer a question of this sort at the present stage of the discussion.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: It appears to me that now is the time to take steps to prevent the filling up of vacancies, so I cannot see how the question can be said to be premature. There are many places which may be vacant at this moment; and if we are not to speak now upon the subject, when are we to speak? If these appointments are filled up, vested interests will be created, and we shall then have no opportunity of objecting.

Mr. H. J. GILL (Limerick): I should like to ask a question as to the subject of the unfair treatment of the postal officials in Cork which was brought before the Committee to-night. Exactly the same state of things happens in Limerick, which is also a first-class town. In Limerick the officials only get 22*s.* a-week, while in Belfast they get 26*s.*, and in Dublin 28*s.* a-week. I would be very much obliged, therefore, if the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury would look into the matter.

Mr. DWYER GRAY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green): While I am in favour of seeing all *employés* fairly paid, I do not think that this is quite the proper time to raise questions as to increasing the salaries of Civil Servants in Ireland. On the contrary, I think that we should rather endeavour to obtain an undertaking that until the important questions which are now before the country are decided there should be no increases of salaries amongst any class of officials in Ireland.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I wish to press the question, Sir, which has been put by my hon. Friend the Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor)—namely, that there shall be no increase in the cost of the Civil Service. It is well known that all the officials are now making snug berths for their relatives and friends, and we shall one of these days have to commute their pensions. The extent to which this is being done is now becoming a public scandal. I would point out, also, that these people have always been opposed to the interests of Ireland; and while one portion of them are at present engaged making nice little berths for their friends and obtaining increases of salary, another portion of them are engaged in organizing the opposition to the Government of Ireland Bill. I earnestly hope that the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury will inquire into this matter, and put a stop to what is now going on.

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

ARMY.

(2.) £3,282,000, Provisions, Forage, &c.

NAVY ESTIMATES.

(3.) £207,600, Coast Guard Service and Royal Naval Reserves, &c.

(4.) £113,200, Scientific Branch.

CAPTAIN PRICE (Devonport): I wish to ask a question as to the Training School for engineer students. I understand that very considerable alterations are to be made in the system; and, as far as I can make out, many of them merit our warmest approval. But there is one matter which I should like to inquire into. I understand that the junior students are to be trained exclusively at Devonport, and that the senior students are to be transferred to Portsmouth. As a matter of fact, there are about 180 engineer students altogether, and 90 of them are trained at Devonport and 90 at Portsmouth, and they remain at one place or the other throughout their course of instruction. It is now arranged that they are only to remain three years at Devonport, and then be transferred to Portsmouth to complete their course. What I want to know is, what is the reason for this change? It will be inconvenient to the students, and it will certainly be highly inconvenient to the parents. There is one reason why I think this transference should not take place, and that is because it will do away with all that healthy spirit of rivalry which has hitherto existed between the two training schools, and which has done so much good. Another reason I have for objecting to the change is that if you separate the students you get rid of that check which the pressure of the older students exercises upon the younger ones, and which is productive of so much good. The Admiralty, however, may have good reasons for the change; but if they have, why are the younger students to be kept at Devonport and the seniors taken to Portsmouth, because everybody knows that the facilities for training engineer students at Devonport are far better than those at Portsmouth? At Devonport they had a very handsome Institution, which has been provided during the last few years, while at Portsmouth the students have to live on an old hulk. Then, again, there is this question—and it is of far greater importance than anything else—that, of the students who have passed their examination of late, Devonport has been far ahead of Portsmouth. Of the 24 who passed last year there were only two from Portsmouth, and these were the 8th and 16th on the list. These all appear to me to be arguments in favour of retaining the senior students at Devonport, where the facilities are much the better, and transferring the juniors to Portsmouth. On the other side, it is said that the students have now to undergo a course of torpedo practice, and that the facilities are much better at Portsmouth than at Devonport. That cannot be so, however, because a Torpedo School has been fitted up at Devonport, and is quite as good as that which exists at Portsmouth. I shall be exceedingly glad if the right hon. Gentleman will give me some explanation on these points.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. HIBBERT) (Oldham): I shall be glad to give my hon. and gallant Friend all the information I can on this subject. I agree with all that he has said as to the School at Devonport having secured better results than Portsmouth; but the proposal which is not yet complete, but is still under consideration, was made on the recommendation of a Committee of Inquiry. That Committee was composed of naval men, and men engaged in the Naval College; and there is no doubt that they went into the subject, as to the advantages and disadvantages of Portsmouth and Devonport, most thoroughly. After having done so, they were in favour of Devonport being reserved for the younger students, and Portsmouth for the seniors; and I think my hon. and gallant Friend will see eventually that they had good grounds for so reporting. It is proposed that at Portsmouth there shall be an University Professor of very high attainments. He will be supported by several, at least three, other assistant teachers; and altogether the School or College will be of a superior character to that of Devonport. At the same time, however, the School at Devonport will be kept very much on its present footing. There is no reason for interfering with its *status;* but it is thought that there is a great advantage in the younger students going to one College and the older to another. When the proposal is carried out, and assented to by the Treasury, I think the hon. and gallant Member will find that it is one which will be of great advantage to the students, and will result in much greater benefits to them than the present system.

CAPTAIN PRICE: Is the *Marlborough* to be maintained, or will the students be transferred to a College at Portsmouth?

MR. HIBBERT: That is a large question, and one which has not been considered; but I have no doubt that some change will be made in that respect.

SIR THOMAS BRASSEY (Hastings): I have no objection to the scheme which my right hon. Friend has just explained, and I wish to thank him for the pains which he has taken to obtain improved teaching for the older students at Portsmouth. At the same time, I hope that he will not allow any reduction to be made in the *status* of the School at Devonport, or in the quality of the teaching there.

Vote *agreed to.*

(5.) £812,900, Half-Pay, Reserved Half-Pay, and Retired Pay to Officers of the Navy and Marines.

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow;*

Committee to sit again upon *Wednesday.*

ULSTER CANAL AND TYRONE NAVIGATION BILL.—[BILL 141.]

(*Mr. John Morley, Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

NOMINATION OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

[ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [18th May],

> "That Mr. Henry H. Fowler be a Member of the Select Committee on the Ulster Canal and Tyrone Navigation Bill."

Question again proposed.

Debate *resumed.*

Question put, and *agreed to.*

MR. T. M. HEALY (Londonderry, S.): As I understand it, there are upon the Committee four Members in favour of the Bill, and one opposed to it. I presume the Government have no objection to our having two Members on it who are opposed to the Bill, provided that to the additional Members to be nominated we add the name of another hon. Member in favour of the Bill, so that we shall be 2 to 7.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY) (Nottingham, E.): I have given Notice of my intention to move the appointment of two additional Members to the Committee, one in favour of the Bill, and one against it.

Sir JAMES CORRY, Mr. HASLETT, Mr. WILLIAM O'BRIEN, and Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR *nominated* other Members of the Select Committee.

MOTION.

—o—

DIVORCE BILLS.

Select Committee on Divorce Bills *nominated* of,—Mr. ATTORNEY GENERAL, The LORD ADVOCATE, Mr. MARUM, Sir JOHN MOWBRAY, Mr. PLUNKET, Mr. RAIKES, Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON, Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE, and Mr. WODEHOUSE.

House adjourned at half after Two o'clock.

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HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

VOLUME CCCV.

FOURTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1886.

Explanation of the Abbreviations.

Bills, Read 1°, 2°, 3°, or 1ª, 2ª, 3ª, Read the First, Second, or Third Time.—In Speeches 1R., 2R., 3R., Speech delivered on the First, Second, or Third Reading.—*Amendt.*, Amendment.—*Res.*, Resolution.—*Comm.*, Committee.—*Re-Comm.*, Re-Committal.—*Rep.*, Report.—*Consid.*, Consideration.—*Adj.*, Adjournment or Adjourned.—*cl.*, Clause.—*add. cl.*, Additional Clause.—*neg.*, Negatived.—*M. Q.*, Main Question.—*O. Q.*, Original Question.—*O. M.*, Original Motion.—*P. Q.*, Previous Question.—R. P., Report Progress.—*A.*, Ayes.—*N.*, Noes.—*M.*, Majority.—*1st. Div.*, *2nd. Div.*, First or Second Division.—*l.*, Lords.—*c.*, Commons.

When in this Index a * is added to the Reading of a Bill, it indicates that no Debate took place upon that stage of the measure.

When in the Text or in the Index a Speech is marked thus *, it indicates that the Speech is reprinted from a Pamphlet or some authorized Report.

When in the Index a † is prefixed to a Name or an Office (the Member having accepted or vacated office during the Session) and to Subjects of Debate thereunder, it indicates that the Speeches on those Subjects were delivered in the speaker's private or official character, as the case may be.

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British Colonial Wines—The Convention with Spain
Questions, Sir James Fergusson, Mr. Forwood; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt), The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *May* 13, 906

British Commercial Interests Abroad—Diplomatic and Consular Representatives
Questions, Mr. Howard Vincent, Mr. Hutton; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *May* 21, 1651

British North America Bill [H.L.]
(*The Earl Granville*)
l. Presented; read 1^{a} * *May* 17 (No. 116)
Read 2^{a} * *May* 20
Committee; Report *May* 21, 1649
Read 3^{a} * *May* 24

Broadhurst, Mr. H. (Under Secretary of State for the Home Department), *Birmingham, Bordesley*
Commons Regulation (Hayling) Provisional Order, 2R. 750, 751

Brodrick, Hon. W. St. J. F., *Surrey, Guildford*
Secret Service Money, 1831
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1941; Motion for reporting Progress, 1942, 1950

Brookfield, Colonel A. M., *Sussex, Rye*
Army—Contracts for Forage, 1286
Nile Expeditions—The Rations, 1286

Brooks, Sir W. C., *Cheshire, Altrincham*
Import Duties, Res. 1065

Brunner, Mr. J. T., *Cheshire, Northwich*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *add. cl.* 128
Customs and Inland Revenue, Comm. *cl.* 7, 687; *add. cl.* 1028, 1029
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Police Forces (Removal of Disabilities), Motion for Leave, 1632
Public Health Acts (Improvement Expenses), Comm. 1412

Bryce, Mr. J. (Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), *Aberdeen, S.*
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America (South)—The Argentine Republic, 1521
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Bryce, Mr. J.—*cont.*
Egypt—Sir H. Drummond Wolff's Mission, 565
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Peru—Peruvian Bondholders, 900, 901, 902
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Spain—Commercial Convention, 1162;—Signatures of the, 570, 572
Supply—Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, 179
Tenure of Land—Homestead and Exemption Laws in the United States, 525
Trade and Commerce—Convention with Spain—British Colonial Produce, 1041;—British Colonial Wines, 907;—Imitation British Trade Marks, 1519
Vaccination—The Island of Rügen, 1040
Venezuela—The Territory of the Yuruary, 1160

Buchanan, Mr. T. R., *Edinburgh, W.*
Burgh Police and Health (Scotland), 2R. 688, 689
Lowe's Charity (Lichfield), Res. 1393
Parliament—Business of the House—Burgh Police and Health (Scotland), 570
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1856, 1857, 1962

Buckingham and Chandos, Duke of (Chairman of Committees)
Incumbents of Benefices Loans Extension, 2R. 1150

Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) Bill
[H.L.] (*The Lord Advocate*) [Bill 194]
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *May* 10, 687; after short debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Dr. Cameron*); Motion agreed to

Burial Grounds Bill (*Mr. Osborne Morgan, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Mr. Broadhurst*)
c. Read 2°, after debate *May* 3, 251 [Bill 131]

Burial Grounds (Scotland) Act (1855) Amendment Bill (*Lord Balfour*)
l. Read 2^{a} * *May* 10 (No. 78)
Committee *; Report *May* 13
Read 3^{a} * *May* 17

Burmah—Military Executions—Colonel Hooper
Question, Mr. James Maclean; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Mr. Stafford Howard) *May* 7, 525

BUXTON, Mr. E. N., *Essex, Walthamstow*
  Commons Regulation (Hayling) Provisional Order, 2R. Amendt. 733, 741

BYRNE, Mr. G. M., *Wicklow, W.*
  Ireland, State of, 753
  Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Department, 1913

CAINE, Mr. W. S., *Barrow-in-Furness*
  Education Department—School Board Elections—Hours of Polling, 541

CAMERON, Dr. C., *Glasgow, College*
  Burgh Police and Health (Scotland), 2R. 689; Motion for Adjournment, 690
  Conveyancing (Scotland) Act (1874) Amendment, 2R. 1407, 1411
  Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 16, 36, 47, 79
  Lighthouse Illuminants—Correspondence, 902
  Lowe's Charity (Lichfield), Res. 1402
  Post Office—Secrecy of Telegrams, 1821, 1822
  Scotland—Alleged Frauds by "Principal" Nero, 903
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  Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1845, 1951, 1961; Amendt. 1964, 1968, 1969
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CAMERON, Mr. J. M., *Wick, &c.*
  Ceylon—Railway Construction, 15
  Crofters (Scotland (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 29; Amendt. 91, 92, 93, 94; Consid. *cl.* 33, 476, 478
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  War Office Establishment — Supplementary Clerks, 11

CAMPBELL, Sir G., *Kirkcaldy, &c.*
  Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 14, 22, 23; *cl.* 15, 29; *cl.* 16, 35, 38, 70, 73; Amendt. 77, 80; *cl.* 28, 88; *cl.* 29, 90, 95, 97; Amendt. 98, 99, 101, 102, 108, 115; *add. cl.* 125; Consid. *cl.* 6, Amendt. 466; *cl.* 8, Amendt. 468; *cl.* 13, Amendt. 471; *cl.* 33, Amendt. 475
  Egypt—Sir H. Drummond Wolff's Mission, 564
  Ireland—Land Purchases, 20;—Statistics of Purchases, 267
  Opium, Res. 318
  Parliament—Business of the House, 270
    Notices of Motions and Orders of the Day, 1290

CAMPBELL, Mr. H., *Fermanagh, S.*
  Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1584
  Ireland—Royal Irish Constabulary—Constable Hayes, 760

CAMPBELL, Mr. J. A., *Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities*
  Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 29, Amendt. 103

CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Right Hon. H. (Secretary of State for War), *Stirling, &c.*
  Army—Questions
    Co-operative Stores, 756, 757
    India—Royal Engineer Officers, 1156
    Pensions — Case of James Kelly, Army Pensioner, 4
    Purchase System—Purchase Lieutenants, 3
    Quartermasters, 1832
    Stores—Military Tents, 6
  Army (Auxiliary Forces)—Militia Regulations, 907
  Army Estimates—Vote on Account, 1667
  Egypt—Questions
    British Troops in Egypt—Sanitary Condition, 764
    Military Expedition—Battle of Ginnis, 762
    Nile Expedition, 1884-5, 1039
  Government of Ireland, 2R. 932, 982, 1170, 1316
  Ireland—Lord Wolseley—Speech of Mr. W. Johnston, M.P., 908
  Navy—H.M.S. "Collingwood"—Bursting of the 43-ton Gun, 905, 1161
  Political Demonstrations — Military Bands, 1661
  War Department—Manufacture of Guns, 1652
  War Office Establishment — Supplementary Clerks, 12

Canada, The Dominion of, and the United States — Treaty of Washington — Fishery Disputes
  Question, Mr. Baden-Powell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Osborne Morgan) *April* 19, 19

Canadian Fisheries — The "David J. Adams"
  Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Osborne Morgan) *May* 13, 910; Question, Mr. Baden-Powell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *May* 14, 1041; Question, Sir Frederick Stanley; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Osborne Morgan) *May* 24, 1831

Canals and Railway Companies
  Question, Mr. Herbert Gardner; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *May* 6, 374

CANTERBURY, Archbishop of
  Church Patronage, 2R. 879, 894
  Incumbents of Benefices Loans Extension, 2R. 1150
  Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister, 2R 1813

Cape Race Lighthouse Bill
(*Lord Houghton*)
l. Royal Assent *May* 10 [49 *Vict.* c.13]

CARBUTT, Mr. E. H., *Monmouth, &c.*
Navy—Questions
Armament, &c.—The 43-ton Gun, 1658
H.M.S. "Collingwood"—Bursting of the 43-ton Gun, 1650, 1651
Ordnance, &c.—Naval Guns, 1829

Cattle Markets—Weighing Machines
Question, Mr. Seton-Karr; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Mr. C. T. D. Acland) *May* 24, 1835

Central Asia
Afghan Demarcation Commission, Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *May* 10, 568
Mission to Thibet, Question, Mr. Hutton; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Mr. Stafford Howard) *May* 11, 755

Ceylon—Railway Construction
Question, Mr. Macdonald Cameron; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Osborne Morgan) *April* 19, 15

CHAMBERLAIN, Right Hon. J. *Birmingham, W.*
Government of Ireland, 2R. 1312, 1313
Government of Ireland Bill Debate, 1664

CHAMBERLAIN, Mr. R., *Islington, W.*
Charterhouse, 2R. 505

CHANCE, Mr. P. A., *Kilkenny, S.*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 16, 82, 83; *cl.* 29, 95; Amendt. 96, 97, 98, 100, 101, 107, 109, 117; *add. cl.* 112, 124, 125, 132, 135; Amendt. 140; Schedule, Amendt. 142
Parliamentary Elections (Ireland) (Clerical Interference), Motion for Leave, 1629
Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers' Expenses) (Ireland), 2R. 833
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Stannaries Act (1869) Amendment, 2R. 1624
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1894, 1906, 1951, 1953, 1958, 1970
Trees (Ireland), Lords' Amendts. Consid. 1257, 1258, 1259

CHANCELLOR, The Lord (*see* HERSCHELL, Lord)

CHANCELLOR of the DUCHY of LANCASTER (*see* KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Right Hon. Sir U. J.)

CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (*see* HARCOURT, Right Hon. Sir W. G. V.)

Channel Islands, The—Revenues of Guernsey
Question, Mr. Boyd-Kinnear; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *May* 18, 1282

CHANNING, Mr. F. A., *Northampton, E.*
Railway Regulation, 2R. 1440, 1461, 1462

CHAPLIN, Right Hon. H., *Lincolnshire, Sleaford*
Cottagers' Allotment Gardens, 2R. 1780, 1788, 1792
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 16, 79; *cl.* 29, 95; *add. cl.* 124
Government of Ireland, 2R. 1315, 1316, 1318, 1319, 1330, 1333

Charities, &c. (Exemption from Local Rates) Bill (*Sir Julian Goldsmid, Mr. Baggallay, Mr. Octavius Morgan, Sir Robert Fowler, Baron F. de Rothschild, Sir Algernon Borthwick, Mr. H. W. Lawson*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *May* 11 [Bill 210]

Charity Commissioners—Inkberrow Charities
Question, Dr. Foster; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) *May* 18, 1280

Charterhouse Bill [Lords] (by Order)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" (*Sir Richard Webster*) *May* 7, 496
Amendt. To leave out from "That," add "in the opinion of this House, it is inexpedient to abolish the Hospital founded by Thomas Sutton in the London Charterhouse, to mutilate a most interesting relic of Old London, and to cover with buildings a considerable area of open ground in the heart of the Metropolis, in order to re-construct a Charity which, in its present form, carries out the intention of the Founder, and has not been shown to be unsuitable to the needs of the present day, or to have given rise to abuses" (*Mr. Walter James*) *v.*; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Beresford Hope*); after further short debate, Question put; A. 99, N. 198; M. 99 (D. L. N. 89)
Question again proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after short debate, Amendt. withdrawn; Motion withdrawn; Bill withdrawn

CHILDERS, Right Hon. H. C. E. (Secretary of State for the Home Department), *Edinburgh, S.*
Coal Mines Regulation, Motion for Leave, 1405, 1406
Death Penalty, Res. 787
Government of Ireland, 2R. 1739, 1748, 1752
Law and Police (England)—Eviction of Miners in Durham, 15

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CHILDERS, Right Hon. H. C. E.—*cont.*
  Losses by Riot (Compensation), Motion for Leave, 805, 808; 2R. 1612, 1614
  Lowe's Charity (Lichfield), Res. 1395
  Married Women (Maintenance in Case of Desertion), 2R. 347
  Metropolis — Fires — Fatal Fire in Beak Street, 1518
  Mines Regulation Act—Weights and Measures, 1652
  Mining Royalties, Res. 1139
  Parliament — Business of the House, 568;—Orders of the Day for Second Reading — Postponement of Unprinted Bills, 340, 341
  Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers) Act (1875) Amendment, 2R. 1142, 1143
  Parliamentary Franchise, 2R. 354
  Police Superannuation, 1827
  Probation of First Offenders, 2R. 337
  Public Health—Removal of Small-Pox Prisoners, 759, 760
  Quarry (Fencing), 2R. 347
  Representation of the People Act (1884) Extension, 2R. 343, 344
  Stannaries Act (1869) Amendment, 2R. 1623, 1625
  Supply—Convict Establishments in England and the Colonies, 206
    Metropolitan Police, 200
    Police — Counties and Boroughs, Great Britain, 205
    Prisons, England, 210
    Reformatory and Industrial Schools, Great Britain, 214
    Supreme Court of Judicature, 187
  Vaccination Laws—Repeated Prosecutions—Case of Charles Hayward, Ashford, Kent, 268, 269
  Westminster Hall—Admission of the Public, 1037

CHURCHILL, Right Hon. Lord R. H. S., *Paddington, S.*
  Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1543, 1544, 1550, 1553, 1602
  Charterhouse, 2R. 521
  Compulsory Purchase of Land Compensation, 2R. 865
  Government of India—The Joint Committee, 1161, 1162
  Government of Ireland, 2R. 596, 1003, 1217, 1224, 1748, 1770
  Municipal Franchise (Ireland), 2R. 328, 331
  Navy — H.M.S. "Colossus" — The 43-ton Guns, 1525
  Parliament —Business of the House, 573;—Orders of the Day for Second Reading—Postponement of Unprinted Bills, 340, 341
  Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1863, 1864, 1865
    New Harbour at Dover, 164

Church Patronage Bill (*Mr. Rylands, Mr. Leatham, Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Mr. Brinton*)
  c. Order for Committee read; Moved, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair" (*Mr. Leatham*) *May* 12, 875; after short debate, Debate adjourned [Bill 4]

Church Patronage Bill [H.L.]
  (*The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*)
  l. Read 2ª, and referred to a Select Committee, after short debate *May* 13, 879 (No. 63)
  Select Committee nominated *May* 17; List of the Committee, 1154

Civil Service Writers and Clerks
  Questions, Sir Guyer Hunter, Mr. Bazley White; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *May* 6, 368; Question, Mr. Vanderbyl; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *May* 14, 1040

CLARK, Dr. G. B., *Caithness*
  Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 15, 30; *cl.* 16, 36; Amendt. 39, 48, 71; Motion for reporting Progress, 72, 76, 80; *cl.* 19, Amendt, 85; *cl.* 29, Amendt. 89, 90, 91, 94, 100, 107, 112, 113, 115, 117; *add. cl.* 122, 128, 129, 137, 139
  Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1892, 1967

CLARKE, Mr. E. G., *Plymouth*
  Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1584
  Government of Ireland, 2R. 948, 959, 1005, 1006

CLONCURRY, Lord
  Labourers (Ireland) Acts Amendment, Comm. *cl.* 13, Amendt. 1270

Coal Mines Regulation Bill
  (*Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. Broadhurst*)
  c. Motion for Leave (*Mr. Secretary Childers*) *May* 18, 1405; after short debate, Motion agreed to; Bill ordered; read 1° * [Bill 217]

COBB, Mr. H. P., *Warwick, S.E., Rugby*
  Allotments Extension Act, 1882, 19

COHEN, Mr. L. L., *Paddington, N.*
  Exchequer Deposits, 524
  Railway and Canal Traffic, 2R. 427

COLERIDGE, Hon. B., *Sheffield, Attercliffe*
  Government of Ireland, 2R. 1019

COLONIES—Secretary of State for (*see* GRANVILLE, Earl)

COLONIES—Under Secretary of State for (*see* MORGAN, Right Hon. G. Osborne)

COLVILLE of CULROSS, Lord
  Salmon Fisheries Amendment, 2R. 702

COMMERELL, Admiral Sir J. E., *Southampton*
  Army—Ordnance Survey—The Royal Engineers, 1286

Committee of Council on Education—Vice President (*see* Playfair, Right Hon. Sir Lyon)

Commons Regulation (Hayling) Provisional Order Bill
(*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *May* 11, 732
Amendt. to leave out "now," add "upon this day six months" (*Mr. Edward Buxton*); Question proposed, "That 'now,' &c.;" Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. T. M. Healy*); Question put, and negatived; after debate, original Question, "That 'now,' &c." put, and negatived; words added
Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to; 2R. put off for six months [Bill 165]

Commons Regulation (Stoke) Provisional Order Bill
(*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Report * *May* 12 [Bill 164]
Read 3° * *May* 13
l. Read 1ª * (*Lord Sudeley*) *May* 17 (No. 102)

Commons Regulation and Inclosure (Totternhoe) Provisional Order Bill
(*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Report * *May* 12 [Bill 166]
Read 3° * *May* 13
l. Read 1ª * (*Lord Sudeley*) *May* 17 (No. 103)

Companies Acts Amendment Bill
(*The Earl of Dalhousie*)
l. Read 2ª, after short debate *May* 18, 1271
Committee * *May* 20 (No. 82)
Report * *May* 21 (No. 121)
Read 3ª * *May* 24

Compton, Lord W. G., *Warwick, Stratford-upon-Avon*
Cottagers' Allotment Gardens, 2R. 1791

Compulsory Purchase of Land Compensation Bill (*Mr. M'Laren, Mr. Houldsworth, Mr. Joseph Bolton, Mr. Jesse Collings*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *May* 12, 855
Amendt. to leave out "now," add "upon this day six months" (*Mr. Gregory*); Question proposed, "That 'now,' &c;" after debate, Question put; A. 203, N. 103; M. 100 (D. L. 99)
Main Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2° [Bill 145]

Condon, Mr. T. J., *Tipperary, E.*
Ireland—Law and Police—Assault by a Caretaker, 1037

Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts—Amending Legislation
Question, Mr. Duckham; Answer, The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth) *May* 6, 370

Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act, 1878 *—Compulsory Slaughter—Amount of Cost and Incidence*
Question, Mr. Duckham; Answer, The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth) *May* 6, 370

Contagious Diseases (Animals) Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord President*)
l. Presented; read 1ª * *May* 21 (No. 122)

Continuance Sittings Bill
Question, Mr. Baden-Powell; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Charles Russell) *April* 19, 14

Conveyancing (Scotland) Act (1874) Amendment Bill
(*Dr. Cameron, Mr. Craig-Sellar, Mr. Donald Crawford, Mr. Lyell*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *May* 18, 1407; after short debate, Question put; A. 55, N. 28; M. 27 (D. L. 98); Bill read 2° [Bill 127]

Conway, Mr. M., *Leitrim, N.*
Education Department — School Boards and Voluntary Schools, 1163

Conybeare, Mr. C. A. V., *Cornwall, Camborne*
Commons Regulation (Hayling) Provisional Order, 2R. 748
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 16, 81
Lowe's Charity (Lichfield), Res. 1404
Mining Royalties, Res. 1127
Mining Royalties (Cornwall and Devon), 2R. 1625, 1627
Stannaries Act (1869) Amendment, 2R. Motion for Adjournment, 1620, 1624

Cook, Mr. E. R., *West Ham, N.*
Death Penalty, Res. 786
Education Department—School Board Elections—Hours of Polling, 541

Cook, Mr. W. T. G., *Birmingham, E.*
Public Health Acts (Improvement Expenses), Comm. 1412

Coope, Mr. O. E., *Middlesex, Brentford*
Egypt — British Troops in Egypt—Sanitary Condition, 764

Coote, Mr. T., *Huntingdon, S.*
Political Demonstrations — Military Bands, 1661
Poor Law Guardians (Ireland), 2R. 1439
Supply—Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, 177
Supreme Court of Judicature, 186

Corbet, Mr. W. J., *Wicklow, E.*
Ireland—Piers and Harbours—Arklow Breakwater, 362, 763, 764, 1040
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1905, 1912

Cork, Earl of
Earl of Redesdale, the late—Chairman of this House—Obituary Notice, 357

Corry, Sir J. P., *Armagh, Mid*
Government of Ireland, 2R. 1178
Municipal Franchise (Ireland), 2R. 327, 329
Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers' Expenses) (Ireland), 2R. 853
Ulster Canal and Tyrone Navigation, 2R. 250

Cossham, Mr. H., *Bristol, E.*
Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers' Expenses) (Ireland), 2R. 834
Supply—New Harbour at Dover, 173

Cottagers' Allotment Gardens Bill
(*Mr. Chaplin, Sir William Hart Dyke, Colonel Harcourt, Viscount Curzon, Mr. Charles Hall*) [Bill 186]
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *May* 21, 1780
Amendt. to leave out "now," add "upon this day six months" (*Mr. Arch*); Question proposed, "That 'now,' &c.;" after short debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Johns*); after further short debate, Question put; A. 106, N. 91; M. 15 (D. L. 103); Debate adjourned

Cotton, Capt. E. T. D., *Cheshire, Wirral*
Customs and Inland Revenue, Comm. *add. cl.* 1027

Courtney, Mr. L. H. (Chairman of Committees of Ways and Means and Deputy Speaker), *Cornwall, Bodmin*
Charterhouse, 2R. 515
Commons Regulation (Hayling) Provisional Order, 2R. 746
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 14, 23; *cl.* 15, 25; *cl.* 16, 65, 70, 72, 83; *cl.* 29, 90, 91, 101, 102, 104, 105, 109; *add. cl.* 120, 124, 127, 128, 129, 130
Customs and Inland Revenue, Comm. 687
Dundalk Gas, Consid. 1507
Lowe's Charity (Lichfield), Res. 1403
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1845, 1853, 1873, 1874, 1886, 1927, 1940, 1942, 1950, 1951, 1961, 1962, 1964
New Harbour at Dover, 164, 166

Courtown, Earl of
Labourers (Ireland) Acts Amendment, Comm. *cl.* 11, 1265

Cowen, Mr. J., *Newcastle-on-Tyne*
South-Eastern Europe—Greece—Blockade of the Greek Coast, 570

Cox, Mr. J. R., *Clare, E.*
Inland Revenue—Income Tax Collectors, 758
Ireland—Royal Irish Constabulary—Transfers from Downpatrick, 12
Veterinary Portal Inspectors, 1031

Cranbrook, Viscount
Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham), Comm. *cl.* 1, 1638

Crawford, Mr. D., *Lanark, N.E.*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *add. cl.* 135; Consid. *cl.* 22, Amendt. 474
Land Transfer (Scotland), 2R. 827

Crawford and Balcarres, Earl of
Salmon Fisheries Amendment, 2R. 702

Cremer, Mr. W. R., *Shoreditch, Haggerston*
Metropolis—Railway Extension, 17, 1528
Parliament—Controverted Elections—Stepney Election, 16

Crilly, Mr. D., *Mayo, N.*
Supply—Customs and Inland Revenue Department, 1940

Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2) Bill—Names of the Commissioners
Question, Mr. Craig-Sellar; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *May* 7, 528

Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2) Bill
(*Mr. Trevelyan, The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland*)
c. Committee [Sixth Night]; Report *April* 19, 21 [Bill 118]
Considered *May* 6, 466 [Bill 200]
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3°" *May* 10, 678; after short debate, Question put; A. 219, N. 52; M. 167 (D. L. 90); Bill read 3°
l. Read 1ª * (*Earl of Dalhousie*) *May* 11 (No. 95)
Read 2ª, after debate *May* 20, 1466

Crompton, Mr. C., *Staffordshire, Leek*
Compulsory Purchase of Land Compensation, 2R. 861
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 29, 108
Pacific Blockade of Greece, 1288

Cross, Right Hon. Sir R. A., *Lancashire, S.W., Newton*
Burial Grounds, 2R. 253
Coal Mines Regulation, Motion for Leave, 1406
Death Penalty, Res. 786, 788
Education Department—Religious Instruction in School Board Schools, 1829
Freshwater Fisheries, 2R. 1615, 1616
Government of Ireland, 2R. 1165, 1170
Losses by Riot (Compensation), Motion for Leave, 808; 2R. 1613
Lowe's Charity (Lichfield), Res. 1307
Railway and Canal Traffic, 2R. 404

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Cross, Right Hon. Sir R. A.—*cont.*
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1947
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Currency, &c.—Gold Coinage
Question, Mr. Kimber; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt) *May* 17, 1159

Currie, Sir D., *Perthshire, W.*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 15, 26; Amendt. 32; *cl.* 16, 50; Consid. *cl.* 18, Amendt. 472

Curzon, Viscount, *Bucks, Wycombe*
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Customs and Inland Revenue Bill
(*Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Henry H. Fowler*)
c. Read 2°, after short debate *May* 3, 230
Committee—R.P. *May* 10, 683 [Bill 190]
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Read 3° * *May* 14
l. Read 1ª * (*L. Sudeley*) *May* 17 (No. 112)
Read 2ª *; Committee negatived *May* 20
Read 3ª, after short debate *May* 21, 1648

Dalhousie, Earl of (Secretary for Scotland)
Companies Acts Amendment, 2R. 1271
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), 2R. 1466
Salmon Fisheries Amendment, 2R. 699, 703
Universities (Scotland), 1146

Dalrymple, Mr. C., *Ipswich*
Burgh Police and Health (Scotland), 2R. 688

Death Penalty
Moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived for the abolition of the death penalty for the crime of murder" (*Sir Joseph Pease*) *May* 11, 767
Amendt. to leave out from "House," add "it is desirable that offences, for which the penalty of death now follows a verdict of guilty, unless remitted by Her Majesty, should be divided into three categories, as recommended by a Royal Commission in 1866; and in order that executions, when necessary, may be carried out with every regard to humanity and decency, an experienced person should be selected by the Government for the purpose, and adequately remunerated from public funds" (*Mr. Howard Vincent*) *v.*; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after debate, Question put, and agreed to
Main Question put; A. 63, N. 117; M. 54 Div. List, A. and N. 789

De Cobain, Mr. E. S. W., *Belfast, E.*
Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1579, 1580, 1581
Parliamentary Elections (Ireland) (Clerical Interference), Motion for Leave, 1630

Dickson, Major A. G., *Dover*
Dover Harbour Board, 365, 367
Supply—New Harbour at Dover, 167

Dillon, Mr. J., *Mayo, E.*
Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1577, 1581
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Government of Ireland, 2R. 994, 997, 1003, 1005, 1006, 1771
Ireland—Poor Law—Claremorris—Intimidation, 1520
Police Forces Enfranchisement, Comm. 147
Police Forces (Removal of Disabilities), Motion for Leave, 1631
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1862, 1863, 1864, 1946

Dimsdale, Baron R., *Herts, Hitchin*
Beer Adulteration (No. 3), 2R. 874
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Distress for Rent Amendment Bill
(*Mr. Burt, Mr. Arthur Williams, Mr. William Cook, Mr. Robson*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *May* 19 [Bill 220]

Divorce Bills
Select Committee nominated *May* 24; List of the Committee, 1974

Dover Harbour Board—Mr. Lowndes
Questions, Major Dickson, Sir Edward Watkin; Answers, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *May* 6, 365

Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.] (*The Lord Thurlow*)
l. Presented; read 1ª *, and referred to the Examiners *May* 6 (No. 84)
Read 2ª * *May* 18

Drowned Persons (Discovery and Interment) Bill (*The Earl Stanhope*)
l. Read 2ª *May* 6, 358 (No. 77)
Committee *; Report *May* 13
Read 3ª * *May* 17

Duckham, Mr. T., *Herefordshire, Leominster*
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Duff, Mr. R. W. (Civil Lord of the Admiralty), *Banffshire*
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Merchant Shipping—Wreck of the Barque "Cartwell," 1658
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1896

Duncan, Colonel F., *Finsbury, Holborn*
Army—Quartermasters, 1832

Dundalk Gas Bill
c. Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow *May* 19, 1413
Moved, "That the Bill be now taken into Consideration" (*Mr. Dillwyn*) *May* 20, 1495
Amendt. to leave out "now," add "upon this day six months" (*Mr. Nolan*); Question proposed, "That 'now,' &c.;" after short debate, Question put; A. 169, N. 210; M. 41 (D. L. 100); words added
Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to; Consideration, as amended, put off for six months

Durham, Bishop of
Parliament—Business of the House, 878
Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham), 2R. 703; Comm. 1646

Ebrington, Viscount, *Devon, Tavistock*
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Education Department (England and Wales)
Punishment of School Children, Question, Mr. Herbert Gardner; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) *May* 17, 1160
Religious Instruction in School Board Schools, Question, Sir R. Assheton Cross; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) *May* 24, 1829
School Board Elections—Hours of Polling, Observations, Mr. T. Fry; short debate thereon *May* 7, 538
School Boards and Voluntary Schools, Question, Mr. Conway; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) *May* 17, 1163
Schools on the Continent — Mr. Matthew Arnold's Report, Questions, Sir Henry Holland; Answers, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) *May* 21, 1659
Technical Instruction, The Royal Commission on—Second Report—Grants for Science and Art Schools, Question, Mr. Lewis Fry; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) *May* 17, 1154
Technical Instruction in the Use of Tools, Questions, Sir Bernhard Samuelson, Mr. P. M'Donald; Answers, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) *May* 21, 1655
Technical Instruction in Board Schools—The Beethoven Street Schools, Question, Sir Bernhard Samuelson; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) *May* 24, 1833
The Education Code—Examinations, Question, Mr. Mildmay; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir Lyon Playfair) *May* 17, 1155

Egypt (*Questions*)
Army of Occupation — Medical Officers at Suakin, Question, Mr. Mitchell Henry; Answer, The Financial Secretary, War Department (Mr. Herbert Gladstone) *May* 7, 523
British Troops in Egypt—Sanitary Condition, Question, Mr. Coope; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) *May* 11, 764
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Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission, Observations, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *May* 6, 378; Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *May* 10, 564
The Military Expedition — The Battle of Ginnis, Question, Viscount Newark; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) *May* 11, 761
The Nile Expedition, 1884-5, Question, Mr. Stanley Leighton; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) *May* 14, 1039

Elementary Education Provisional Order Confirmation (Birmingham) Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord President*)
l. Presented; read 1^a*, and referred to the Examiners *May* 11 (No. 96)

Elementary Education Provisional Order Confirmation (London) Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord President*)
l. Presented; read 1^a*, and referred to the Examiners *May* 11 (No. 97)

Elgin, Earl of (First Commissioner of Works)
Hyde Park Corner (New Streets), 2R. 1261
National Portrait Gallery, 1636
War Office and Admiralty, the New, 1638

Elliot, Hon. A. R. D., *Roxburgh*
Government of Ireland, 2R. 1380

Ellis, Sir J. W., *Surrey, Kingston*
Income Tax, Res. 805

Ellis, Mr. J., *Leicestershire, Bosworth*
Import Duties, Res. 1089

Employers' Liability Act (1880) Amendment Bill
(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Dr. Commins, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Jesse Collings*)
c. Select Committee; Colonel Blundell and Mr. Hingley added *April* 19

Esmonde, Sir T. G., *Dublin Co., S.*
Ireland — Piers and Harbours — Kingstown Harbour, 1278
Royal Irish Constabulary—Pensions, 1822

Esslemont, Mr. P., *Aberdeenshire, E.*
Agricultural Holdings Act—Fishermen on the North-East Coast of Scotland, 1522
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Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers' Expenses) (Ireland), 2R. 839, 843
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1889, 1892

Everett, Mr. R. L., *Suffolk, Woodbridge*
Felixstowe, Ipswich, and Midlands Railway—Petition for Bill, Res. 722
Parliamentary Franchise, 2R. 853
Representation of the People Act (1884) Extension, 2R. 342

Exchequer Deposits
Question, Mr. Lionel Cohen; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *May* 7, 524

Farquharson, Dr. R., *Aberdeenshire, W.*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 16, 55, 78; Consid. *cl.* 18, Amendt. 473
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Supply—Lord Advocate and Criminal Proceedings, Scotland, 220

Felixstowe, Ipswich, and Midlands Railway—Petition for Bill
Moved, "That the Resolution of the Standing Orders Committee of the 19th day of February last, with respect to the Felixstowe, Ipswich, and Midlands Railway Petition, together with the said Petition, and the Bill annexed thereto, be referred back to the said Committee, and that they have power to inquire whether there are any special circumstances which render it just and expedient that the Standing Orders should be dispensed with in respect to the said Petition" (*Mr. Everett*) *May* 11, 722; after short debate, Motion agreed to

Fenwick, Mr. C., *Northumberland, Wansbeck*
Mining Royalties, Res. 1122

Fergusson, Right Hon. Sir J., *Manchester, N.E.*
Commons Regulation (Hayling) Provisional Order, 2R. 744, 751
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 15, 29; *cl.* 29, Amendt. 98; *add. cl.* 128, 129, 130; Consid. *cl.* 10, 470; *cl.* 33, 477
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Spain — Signatures of the Commercial Convention, 571

Fife, Earl of
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), 2R. 1492

Finch-Hatton, Hon. M. E. G., *Lincolnshire, Spalding*
Commons Regulation (Hayling) Provisional Order, 2R. 743

Finlay, Mr. R. B., *Inverness, &c.*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Consid. *cl.* 33, 477
Government of Ireland, 2R. 1679, 1682, 1691
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Fisheries, Salmon and Freshwater—Transfer to the Board of Trade
Questions, Mr. Portman; Answers, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *May* 21, 1660

FitzGerald, Lord
Labourers (Ireland) Acts Amendment, Comm. *cl.* 3, Amendt. 1263; *cl.* 8, 1265; *cl.* 11, *ib.*, 1268; *cl.* 13, 1270; *cl.* 14, Amendt. *ib.*; *add. cl.* 1271

Fletcher, Mr. B., *Wilts, Chippenham*
Government of Ireland, 2R. 636
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Foreign Affairs—Under Secretary of State (*see* Bryce, Mr. J.)

Foreign Office — Consular and Commercial Reports
Question, Mr. J. G. Hubbard; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *May* 10, 564

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Forwood, Mr. A. B., *Lancashire, Ormskirk*
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Post Office — Insufficiently Addressed Telegrams, 567
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Spain — Signatures of the Commercial Convention, 572, 1162;—British Colonial Wines, 906

Foster, Dr. B., *Chester*
Charity Commissioners—Inkberrow Charities, 1280
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  India—Calcutta Custom House—Adulteration of M'Gavin and Co.'s Whisky, 1524
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  Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers) Act (1875) Amendment, 2R. 1143
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  Customs and Inland Revenue, Comm. *cl.* 7, 686; *add. cl.* 1026, 1029
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  Post Office (Scotland)—Questions
    Deliveries of Mails to Portree, 150
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(*Mr. Charles Acland, Mr. Mundella*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *May* 18 [Bill 218]
Read 2°, after short debate *May* 20, 1614

Friendly Societies Act, 1875
  Questions, The Earl of Iddesleigh; Answers, The Lord Chancellor (Lord Herschell) *May* 18, 1272

Friendly Societies Act (1875) Amendment Bill [H.L.] (*The Lord Greville*)
l. Presented; read 1ª * *May* 13 (No. 99)

Friendly Societies Act (1875) Amendment Bill (*Mr. Norton, Viscount Folkestone, Sir Herbert Maxwell, Mr. Hoyle*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *May* 21 [Bill 228]

FRY, Mr. L., *Bristol, N.*
  Education Department—School Board Elections—Hours of Polling, 543
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FRY, Mr. T., *Darlington*
  Education Department—School Board Elections—Hours of Polling, 538

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  Salmon Fisheries Amendment, 2R. 702

GARDNER, Mr. H., *Essex, Saffron Walden*
  Beer Adulteration (No. 3), 2R. 873
  Canals and Railway Companies, 374
  Education Department— Punishment of School Children, 1160
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Gas Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill
(*Mr. Charles Acland, Mr. Mundella*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 19 [Bill 196]
Read 2° * *May* 11

Gas Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill
(*Mr. Charles Acland, Mr. Mundella*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *May* 18 [Bill 214]

Gas and Water Provisional Orders Bill
(*Mr. Charles Acland, Mr. Mundella*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *May* 7 [Bill 206]
Read 2° * *May* 18

Gibraltar—Sir John Adye
  Question, Viscount Curzon; Answer, The Financial Secretary, War Department (Mr. Herbert Gladstone) *May* 7, 526

GILHOOLY, Mr. J., *Cork, W.*
  Ireland—Arms Act—Licences, 1824
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  Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1970

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  Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1564, 1569
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    Irish Policy of the Government—Meeting at Belfast, 1044
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GOLDSMID, Sir J., *St. Pancras, S.*
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  Secret Service Money, 1831
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    Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, 179

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  Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1562

GORST, Sir J. E., *Chatham*
  Death Penalty, Res. 784, 789

Government of Ireland Bill [Bill 181]
  (*Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Attorney General*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *May* 10, 574
  Amendt. to leave out "now," add "upon this day six months" (*The Marquess of Hartington*); Question proposed, "That 'now,' &c.;" after long debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Sir Henry James*); Motion agreed to
  Debate resumed [Second Night] *May* 13, 912; after long debate, Debate further adjourned
  Debate resumed [Third Night] *May* 17, 1165; after long debate, Debate further adjourned
  Debate resumed [Fourth Night] *May* 18, 1299; after long debate, Debate further adjourned
  Debate resumed [Fifth Night] *May* 21, 1667; after long debate, Debate further adjourned

Government of Ireland Bill
  Clause 29—Resident Magistrates, Question, Mr. Trevelyan; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) *April* 19, 14
  The Civil Service, Questions, Mr. Stanley Leighton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) *May* 11, 763; *May* 24, 1826
  The Debate, Questions, Observations, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach; Questions, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Labouchere; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone); Observations, The Marquess of Hartington *May* 21, 1663; Questions, Mr. Richard, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone); short debate thereon *May* 24, 1836
  The Schedules, Question, Mr. Raikes; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *May* 18, 1288

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  Malta, Res. 1149
  Parliament—Earl of Redesdale, The late—Chairman of Committees of this House—Obituary Notice, 355, 358
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GRAY, Mr. E. Dwyer, *Dublin, St. Stephen's Green*
- Poor Law Guardians (Ireland), 2R. 1419
- Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1957, 1970

Greece, Affairs of
- *The Greek Government and the European Powers,* Question, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *May* 4, 270; Question, Mr. Bourke; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *May* 6, 377
- *Reply of the Greek Government,* Question, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *May* 7, 529
- *Blockade of the Greek Coast,* Ministerial Statement, The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (The Earl of Rosebery); Observations, The Marquess of Salisbury *May* 10, 546; Questions, Mr. Bourke, Mr. Joseph Cowen; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce), 569
- *Pacific Blockade of Greece,* Question, Mr. Crompton; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *May* 18, 1288

GREEN, Mr. H., *Tower Hamlets, Poplar*
- Public Health (Metropolis)—The Isle of Dogs, 1157

Greenwich Hospital — The Wives and Families of Naval Pensioners
- Question, Captain Price; Answer, The Civil Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. R. W. Duff) *May* 7, 528

GREGORY, Mr. G. B., *Sussex, East Grinstead*
- Compulsory Purchase of Land Compensation, 2R. Amendt. 857
- Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 29, 94
- Customs and Inland Revenue, 2R. 233; Comm. *add. cl.* 1023
- Infants, Consid. *cl.* 2, 249
- Land Transfer (Scotland), 2R. 818
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GREY, Mr. A. H. G., *Northumberland, Tyneside*
- Secret Service Money, 1829
- Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1853, 1855, 1856

HALDANE, Mr. R. B., *Haddington*
- Conveyancing (Scotland) Act (1874) Amendment, 2R. 1410
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- Ireland—Piers and Harbours—Holyhead Pier, 1522

HAMILTON, Lord E., *Tyrone, N.*
- Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1576
- Ireland—Prisons—Omagh Gaol, 1529

HAMILTON, Lord F., *Manchester, S.W.*
- America (South)—The Argentine Republic, 1521

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- Question, Sir John Jenkins; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *May* 18, 1280

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- Beer Adulteration (No. 3), 2R. 875
- British Colonial Wines — Convention with Spain, 906
- Burgh Police and Health (Scotland), 2R. 689
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  - Finance, &c.—Depreciation of Silver, 1156
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  - Income Tax, 906;—Building Societies, 6
  - Income Tax Commissioners, 1039
  - Income Tax on Foreign Residents, 1833
  - Salaries of First-Class Assistants, 765
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LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD—Secretary to (*see* BORLASE, Mr. W. C.)

Local Government Provisional Order (County Divisions) Bill
(*Mr. Borlase, Mr. Stansfeld*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *May* 21 [Bill 225]

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (Fermoy) Bill
(*The Lord President*)
l. Committee *; Report *May* 17 (No. 32)
Read 3ª * *May* 18
c. Read 1° * *May* 21 [Bill 226]

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (Public Health Act) Bill [H.L.]
(*The Earl of Kimberley*)
l. Read 2ª * *May* 13 (No. 83)
Committee *; Report *May* 21
Read 3ª * *May* 24

Local Government Provisional Orders Bill (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Read 2° * *May* 3 [Bill 173]
Report * *May* 12
Read 3° * *May* 13
l. Read 1ª * (*Lord Sudeley*) *May* 17 (No. 104)

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Read 2° * *May* 3 [Bill 174]
Report * *May* 12
Read 3ª * *May* 13
l. Read 1ª * (*Lord Sudeley*) *May* 17 (No. 105)

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill (*Mr. Borlase, Mr. Stansfeld*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *May* 21 [Bill 223]

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill (*Mr. Borlase, Mr. Stansfeld*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *May* 21 [Bill 224]

Local Government Provisional Orders (Gas) Bill (*Mr. Borlase, Mr. Stansfeld*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *May* 21 [Bill 222]

Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) Bill (*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Read 2° * *May* 3 [Bill 172]
Report * *May* 12
Read 3° * *May* 13
l. Read 1ª * (*Lord Sudeley*) *May* 17 (No. 106)

Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 2) Bill
(*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Read 2° * *May* 3 [Bill 175]
Report * *May* 12
Read 3° * *May* 13
l. Read 1ª * (*Lord Sudeley*) *May* 17 (No. 107)

Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 3) Bill
(*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Read 2° * *May* 3 [Bill 176]
Report * *May* 12
Read 3° * *May* 13
l. Read 1ª * (*Lord Sudeley*) *May* 17 (No. 108)

Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 4) Bill
(*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Read 2° * *May* 3 [Bill 177]
Report * *May* 12
Read 3° * *May* 13
l. Read 1ª * (*Lord Sudeley*) *May* 17 (No. 109)

Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 5) Bill
(*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Read 2° * *May* 3 [Bill 178]
Report * *May* 12
Read 3° * *May* 13
l. Read 1ª * (*Lord Sudeley*) *May* 17 (No. 110)

Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 6) Bill
(*Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Secretary Childers*)
c. Read 2° * *May* 3 [Bill 179]
Report * *May* 12
Read 3° * *May* 13
l. Read 1ª * (*Lord Sudeley*) *May* 17 (No. 111)

LOCKWOOD, Mr. F., *York*
Death Penalty, Res. 777

LONDON, Bishop of
Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham), Comm. 1647

LONGFORD, Earl of
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LORD ADVOCATE, The (*see* BALFOUR, Right Hon. J. B.)

LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND — Chief Secretary to the (*see* MORLEY, Right Hon. J.)

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (*see* SPENCER, Earl)

Losses by Riot (Compensation) Bill
(*Mr. Secretary Childers, Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Attorney General*)
c. Motion for Leave (*Mr. Secretary Childers*) *May* 11, 805; after short debate, Motion agreed to; Bill ordered; read 1° * [Bill 209]
Read 2°, after short debate *May* 20, 1612
Committee *—R.P. *May* 24

Lowe's Charity (*Lichfield*)
Moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, every Scheme of the Charity Commissioners ought to provide for the majority of the Trustees or Managers being directly elected by the ratepayers in the locality to which the Charity extends" (*Sir John Swinburne*) *May* 18, 1385; after short debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. James Stuart*); after further short debate, Question put; A. 59, N. 73; M. 14 (D. L. 97)
Original Question again proposed, 1403; after short debate, original Question put, and agreed to

Lunacy Acts Amendment Bill [H.L.]
(*Mr. Henry H. Fowler*)
c. Read 1° * *April* 19 [Bill 198]

Lunacy (Vacating of Seats) Bill
(*The Lord Balfour*)
l. Royal Assent *May* 10 [49 *Vict.* c. 16]

LYMINGTON, Right Hon. Viscount, *Devon, South Molton*
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MCCULLOCH, Mr. J., *Glasgow, St. Rollox*
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MACDONALD, Right Hon. J. H. A., *Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities*
Conveyancing (Scotland) Act (1874) Amendment, 2R. 1410
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 15, 27; *cl.* 16, 71, 77; *cl.* 29, 96, 97, 102; *add. cl.* 130, 140
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Railway Regulation, 2R. 1464
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MCDONALD, Mr. P., *Sligo, N.*
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MCDONALD, Dr. R., *Ross and Cromarty*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 15, Amendt. 23, 25; *cl.* 16, 35, 59, 77; *cl.* 29, 93; Consid. *cl.* 33, 477
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MACFARLANE, Mr. D. H., *Argyll*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 15, 27; *cl.* 16, Amendt. 33, 37, 46, 70, 73; *cl.* 24, Amendt. 86, 87; *cl.* 29, 90, 92, 93, 99, 106, 107; *add. cl.* Amendt. 119; Motion for reporting Progress, 120, 121, 122, 123; 3R. 678
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McIver, Mr. L., *Devon, Torquay*
  Government of Ireland, 2R. 1718, 1728
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McKenna, Sir J. N., *Monaghan, S.*
  Dundalk Gas, Consid. 1501
  Import Duties, Res. 1106
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  Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1870

Mackintosh, Mr. C. Fraser-, *Inverness-shire*
  Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 15, Amendt. 25, 31; *cl.* 16, 36, 62; *cl.* 18, 85; *cl.* 24, 87; *cl.* 29, 92, 105, 106; *add. cl.* 128, 138; Consid. *cl.* 18, Amendt. 472; 3R. 680
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McLaren, Mr. C. B. B., *Stafford*
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Maclean, Mr. J. M., *Oldham*
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Magniac, Mr. C., *Bedford, N., Biggleswade*
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Makins, Colonel W. T., *Essex, S.E.*
  Felixstowe, Ipswich, and Midlands Railway—Petition for Bill, Res. 726

Malta
  Moved for, "Copies of all Correspondence having reference to the Maltese nobility which has been addressed to or has emanated from the Colonial Office since August 1883, up to the present date" (*The Viscount Sidmouth*) *May* 17, 1149; Motion agreed to

Manners, Right Hon. Lord J. J. R., *Leicestershire, E.*
  Compulsory Purchase of Land Compensation, 2R. 867
  Dundalk Gas, Consid. 1510

March, Earl of, *Sussex, Chichester*
  Admiralty—Pay of Coastguardsmen, 1826

Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill [H.L.] (*The Duke of Saint Albans*)
l. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª" *May* 24, 1793
  Amendt. to leave out ("now,") add ("this day six months") (*The Duke of Argyll*); after debate, on Question, That ("now,") &c.;" Cont. 127, Not-Cont. 149; M. 22; resolved in the negative; Div. List, Cont. and Not-Cont. 1818; Bill to be read 2ª on this day six months (No. 62)

Marriages (Hours of Solemnization) Bill (*Lord Monk-Bretton*)
l. Royal Assent *May* 10 [49 *Vict.* c. 14]

Married Women (Maintenance in Case of Desertion) Bill (*Mr. Pulley, Mr. Thomas Blake, Mr. Winterbotham, Mr. Warmington*)
c. Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [24th March], "That the Bill be now read 2°;" Question again proposed; Debate resumed *May* 5, 344; after short debate, Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2° [Bill 111]
  Order for Committee read *May* 19, 1465
  Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power to extend the provisions of the Bill to the maintenance of children deserted by their father (*Mr. Warmington*); further proceeding on going into Committee deferred

Marum, Mr. E. P. M., *Kilkenny, N.*
  Ireland—Poor Law — Union Amalgamation, 1659
  Poor Law Guardians (Ireland), 2R. 1439

Maskelyne, Mr. M. H. N. Story-, *Wilts, Cricklade*
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Mason, Mr. S., *Lanark, Mid*
  Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 16, 74
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  Mining Royalties, Res. 1113

Mather, Mr. W., *Salford, S.*
  Parliament—Notices of Motions and Orders of the Day, 1297

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MAXWELL, Sir H. E., *Wigton*
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Medical Acts Amendment Bill
(*Sir Lyon Playfair, Mr. Mundella, The Lord Advocate*)
c. Read 2°, after short debate *May* 3, 236
Committee—R.P. *May* 17, 1256 [Bill 163]

Merchandise Marks Act, 1862 — *Marking of British-made Goods*
Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *May* 6, 365

Merchant Shipping Act, 1854 — *The "Creole"*
Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *May* 10, 565

Merchant Shipping—Wreck of the Barque "Cartwell"
Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Civil Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. R. W. Duff) *May* 21, 1657

METROPOLIS
Fires—Fatal Fire in Beak Street, Question, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *May* 20, 1517
Metropolitan Rating—Parish of Putney, Question, Mr. Kimber; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Stansfeld) *May* 20, 1528
Public Health — The Isle of Dogs, Question, Mr. Henry Green; Answer, The Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg) *May* 17, 1157
The Parks—The Carriage Roads, Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) *May* 11, 753
Tramways, Question, Sir Guyer Hunter; Answer, The Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg) *May* 6, 364

Railways
Railway Extension — The Paddington and Limehouse Railway, Question, Mr. Cremer; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *April* 19, 17; Question, Mr. Cremer; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Mr. C. T. D. Acland) *May* 20, 1528

METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS, Chairman of (*see* MCGAREL-HOGG, Sir J. M.)

Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill (*Lord Thurlow*)
l. Read 2ª * *May* 7 (No. 71)
Committee *; Report *May* 11
Read 3ª * *May* 13

Metropolitan Police (Stations) Bill (*Lord Thurlow*)
l. Read 1ª * *May* 6 (No. 87)
Read 2ª *May* 10, 558
Committee *; Report *May* 11
Read 3ª * *May* 13

MIDLETON, Viscount
Navy—Discipline, &c.—Irregularities in Barracks, 556

MILDMAY, Mr. F. B., *Devon, Totnes*
Education Department — Education Code—Examinations, 1155

MILLTOWN, Earl of
Labourers (Ireland) Acts Amendment, Comm. *cl.* 8, 1264

Mines Regulation Act—Weights and Measures Act
Question, Mr. Forwood; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *May* 21, 1652

Mining Leases (Cornwall and Devon) Bill (*Sir John St. Aubyn, Mr. Courtney, Viscount Ebrington, Mr. Bickford Smith, Mr. Seale-Hayne*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *May* 5 [Bill 204]
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *May* 20, 1625; Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Conybeare*); after short debate, Question put; A. 72, N. 69; M. 3 (D. L. 102)

Mining Royalties
Observations, Mr. Mason; Debate thereon *May* 14, 1113

MOLLOY, Mr. B. C., *King's Co., Birr*
Probation for First Offenders, 2R. 338
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MONTAGU, Mr. S., *Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel*
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MORE, Mr. R. J., *Shropshire, Ludlow*
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MORGAN, Right Hon. G. Osborne (Under Secretary of State for the Colonies), *Denbighshire, E.*
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MORGAN, Mr. O. V., *Battersea*
- Inland Revenue (Income Tax) — Building Societies, 5

MORLEY, Right Hon. J. (Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland), *Newcastle-upon-Tyne*
- Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1530, 1531, 1533, 1537, 1543, 1559, 1596
- Government of Ireland, 2R. 926, 1018
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  - Alleged Cattle Stealing, 1526
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  - Home Rule—The Methodist Committee of Privileges, Dublin, 1285
  - Inland Fisheries—Poisoning Fish, 1527
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  - Registration of Elections, Expenses of, 1281
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  - Representation of the People Act, 1884—Requisition Forms — Rate Collectors of Mountmellick Union, 1520, 1521
  - Salmon Fisheries—The Suir Fisheries, 1278
  - Veterinary Portal Inspectors, 1032
- Ireland — Crime and Outrage — Disturbances near Cookstown, 1824
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  - Dungannon Petty Sessions — Intimidation, 1036
  - G. Gibbs and P. Mullins, Case of, 18
  - Longford Assizes — Assault on James and Christopher Newman, 563, 564
- Ireland—Law and Police—Alleged Riot at Listowel, 1527
  - Assault by a Caretaker, 1038
- Ireland—Magistracy—Questions
  - Dungannon, 1283, 1284
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  - Claremorris—Intimidation, 1520
  - Dr. Croker, Dispensary Medical Officer of the Ballymacarrett Division of the Belfast Union, 1031
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- Poor Law Guardians (Ireland), 2R. 1432, 1434
- Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1902, 1904, 1906, 1943, 1944, 1952
- Trees (Ireland), Lords' Amendts. Consid. Amendt. 1258

MORLEY, Mr. A. (Secretary to the Treasury), *Nottingham, E.*
- Government of Ireland, 2R. 1780
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MOWBRAY, Right Hon. Sir J. R., *Oxford University*
- Felixstowe, Ipswich, and Midlands Railway—Petition for Bill, Res. 728

MUNDELLA, Right Hon. A. J. (President of the Board of Trade), *Sheffield, Brightside*
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Municipal Corporations (Scheme Confirmation) Bill [H.L.] (*The Lord President*)
l. Presented; read 1^a, * and referred to the Examiners *May* 7 (No. 90)
Read 2^a * *May* 18

Municipal Franchise (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. James O'Brien, Mr. Timothy Harrington, Mr. Richard Power, Mr. Mayne, Mr. Peter M'Donald*)
c. Read 2^o, after debate *May* 5, 319 [Bill 9]

MURPHY, Mr. W. M., *Dublin, St. Patrick's*
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1936

NAPIER and ETTRICK, Lord
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National Debt Bill
(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Henry H. Fowler*)
c. Read 2^o * *May* 3 [Bill 191]
Committee *; Report *May* 10
Read 3^o * *May* 11
l. Read 1^a * (*L. Thurlow*) *May* 13 (No. 100)
Read 2^a * *May* 14
Committee *; Report *May* 17
Read 3^a * *May* 18

National Provident Insurance
Select Committee nominated *May* 12; List of the Committee, 876

NAVY (*Questions*)
Admiralty—Pay of Coastguardmen, Question, The Earl of March; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *May* 24, 1826
Armament, &c.—The 43-ton Gun, Question, Mr. Carbutt; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *May* 21, 1658
Ordnance, &c.—Naval Guns, Questions, Commander Bethell, Mr. Carbutt; Answers, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Woodall) *May* 24, 1828
Commissions for Seamen of the Fleet, Questions, Captain Verney, Captain Price; Answers, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *May* 20, 1516
Contracts for Cruisers with Private Builders, Questions, Mr. Jacks; Answers, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *May* 11, 760; *May* 21, 1662
Discipline, &c.—Irregularities in Barracks, Question, Observations, Viscount Midleton; Reply, The First Lord of the Admiralty (The Marquess of Ripon) *May* 10, 556

NAVY—*cont.*
H.M.S. "Calypso," Question, Captain Verney; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *May* 24, 1834
H.M.S. "Collingwood" — Bursting of the 43-ton Gun, Questions, Lord George Hamilton, Lord Charles Beresford, Sir Walter B. Barttelot; Answers, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert), The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Woodall) *May* 6, 375; Question, Observations, Viscount Sidmouth, The Earl of Ravensworth; Reply, The First Lord of the Admiralty (The Marquess of Ripon) *May* 7, 492; Question, Captain Price; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert), 527; Questions, Sir Henry Tyler; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) *May* 13, 905; *May* 17, 1160; Questions, Captain Price, Mr. Carbutt; Answers, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Woodall) *May* 21, 1650; Question, Mr. Seager Hunt; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Woodall) *May* 24, 1834
H.M.S. "Colossus" — The 43-ton Guns, Questions, Lord Charles Beresford, Mr. Bethell, Lord Randolph Churchill; Answers, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert), The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Woodall) *May* 20, 1524
H.M.S. "Thunderer," Question, Lord Charles Beresford; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *May* 6, 372
Obsolete Vessels of War, Question, Lord George Hamilton; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *May* 6, 371
Pensions — Samuel Barber, Question, Mr. James Hutton; Answer, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Hibbert) *May* 6, 364

Navy—Royal Naval Volunteer Corps
Moved, "That there be laid before this House any further correspondence respecting the Royal Naval Volunteer Corps from naval officers or other officials who have been instructed to inquire into or to report upon the subject" (*The Viscount Sidmouth*) *May* 7, 490; after short debate, Motion withdrawn

Navy—The Estimates, 1886-7
Moved, "That the Navy Estimates for this year be laid on the Table of this House" (*The Viscount Sidmouth*) *May* 10, 558; after short debate, Motion withdrawn

NEWARK, Viscount, *Notts, Newark*
Egypt—Military Expedition—Battle of Ginnis, 761

NOLAN, Colonel J. P., *Galway, N.*
Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1600
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1910, 1950

NOLAN, Mr. J., *Louth, N.*
Dundalk Gas, Consid. Amendt. 1495, 1501

NORRIS, Mr. E. S., *Tower Hamlets, Limehouse*
Charterhouse, 2R. 506
Peru—Peruvian Bondholders, 902

North Metropolitan Tramways (No. 2) Bill
c. Read 2° *April* 19, 2

NORTON, Lord
Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham), 2R. 713

O'BRIEN, Mr. J. F. X., *Mayo, S.*
Government of Ireland, 2R. 1704
Municipal Franchise (Ireland), 2R. 319

O'BRIEN, Mr. P., *Monaghan, N.*
Army (Pensions)—Case of James Kelly, Army Pensioner, 4

O'BRIEN, Mr. P. J., *Tipperary, N.*
Registration of Voters — Expenses of the Franchise, 1836

O'BRIEN, Mr. W., *Tyrone, S.*
Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1574
Government of Ireland, 2R. 622, 629, 630, 921, 986, 1758, 1763, 1769, 1770, 1771
Ireland—Questions
Law and Justice—Dungannon Petty Sessions—Intimidation, 1036, 1037
Magistracy—Dungannon, 1283, 1284
State of Ireland—Arming of Ulster, 1158
Parliament—Business of the House, 21

O'CONNOR, Mr. A., *Donegal, E.*
Burial Grounds, 2R. 262
Import Duties, Res. 1080
Inland Revenue—Salaries of First Class Assistants, 765
Representation of the People Act, 1884—Requisition Forms—The Rate Collectors of Mountmellick Union, 1520, 1521
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1955, 1969, 1970
Supreme Court of Judicature, 183, 196
Ulster Canal and Tyrone Navigation, 2R. 250
Vaccination—The Island of Rügen, 1040

O'CONNOR, Mr. J., *Kerry, S.*
Ireland, State of—Distress in Kerry, 1038
Poor Law Guardians (Ireland), 2R. 1430

O'CONNOR, Mr. J., *Tipperary, S.*
Ireland—Piers and Harbours—Renard Point Pier, 1517

O'CONNOR, Mr. T. P., *Liverpool, Scotland*
Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1603
Government of Ireland, 2R. 1015, 1762
Government of Ireland Bill Debate, 1837
Ireland—Lord Wolseley—Speech of Mr. William Johnston, M.P., 908
Parliament—Business of the House, 766
Police Forces Enfranchisement, Comm. 145, 146

O'CONNOR, Mr. T. P.—*cont.*
Police Forces (Removal of Disabilities), Motion for Leave, 1632
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1871, 1873, 1950

O'DOHERTY, Mr. J. E., *Donegal, N.*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 29, 97, 101, 109, 110, 116

O'HANLON, Mr. T., *Cavan, E.*
Ireland — Lighthouses — Carlingford Lough Lighthouse, 12
Poor Law—John Taylor, Rate Collector for a District of the Lurgan Poor Law Union, 1159
Palace of Westminster—House of Commons—Accommodation for Members — Lockers, 907

O'HEA, Mr. P., *Donegal, W.*
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1897, 1923

O'KELLY, Mr. J., *Roscommon, N.*
Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1562
Government of Ireland, 2R. 929

O'MARA, Mr. S., *Queen's Co., Ossory*
Dundalk Gas, Consid. 1505

ONSLOW, Earl of
Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham), Comm. 1647

Opium—Cultivation and Manufacture in India
Moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, it is expedient that the Indian Government should take measures to terminate gradually its direct connection with the cultivation of the poppy, and the manufacture of and trade in Opium, and that it should use the powers that it possesses to prohibit in British India the cultivation of the poppy, except to supply the legitimate demand of Opium for medical purposes" (*Sir Joseph Pease*) *May* 4, 278; after debate [House counted out]

ORANMORE and BROWNE, Lord
Labourers (Ireland) Acts Amendment, Comm. *cl.* 11, 1269

ORDNANCE — Surveyor General (*see* WOODALL, Mr. W.)

Oxford University (Justices) Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Chancellor*)
l. Presented; read 1ª * *May* 20 (No. 119)
Read 2ª * *May* 24

PAGET, Sir R. H., *Somerset, Wells*
Army Purchase System — Purchase Lieutenants, 3

PARKER, Mr. C. S., *Perth*
Railway Regulation, 2R. 1463

Parliament

LORDS

The late Earl of Redesdale (*Chairman of the Committees of this House*), Observations, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Earl Granville), The Marquess of Salisbury *May* 6, 355

Chairman of Committees of this House

Moved, "That the Earl of Morley be appointed to take the Chair in all Committees of this House for the remainder of this Session" (*The Earl Granville*) *May* 10, 551

Amendt. to leave out ("Earl of Morley,") insert ("Duke of Buckingham and Chandos") (*The Marquess of Salisbury*); after short debate, on Question, That the words, &c.? Cont. 103, Not-Cont. 122; M. 19; resolved in the negative

Moved to resolve,

"That the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos be appointed to take the Chair in all Committees of this House for the remainder of this Session:

"That the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos do take the Chair in all Committees of the Whole House unless where it shall have been otherwise directed by the House:

"That the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos do also take the Chair in all Committees upon Private Bills and other matters, unless where it shall have been otherwise directed by the House"

Agreed to; and resolved accordingly

Speaker of the House

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House that Her Majesty had (by Commission) appointed the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos Speaker of the House in the absence of the Lord Chancellor: The said Commission was read *May* 18

Private Bills (*Standing Order No.* 128)

The evidence taken before the Select Committee from time to time to be printed, for the use of the Members of this House; but no copies thereof to be delivered, except to Members of the Committee, until further order (No. 118) *May* 18

Representative Peers for Ireland

Ordered, That there be laid before this House a nominal return, in tabular form, of the Lords Temporal at present elected to serve in Parliament for Ireland, arranged according to date of election, with the number of years of service, and showing the naval, military, or civil rank in public service (if any) of each Peer, and also the naval or military commands or civil public offices he may have held (*The Earl of Belmore*) *May* 10

Business of the House, Observations, The Marquess of Salisbury; short debate theron *May* 13, 877

COMMONS—

PRIVATE BILLS

Ordered, That Standing Orders 39 and 129 be suspended, and that the time for depositing

[*cont.*

PARLIAMENT—COMMONS—*Private Bills—cont.*

Petitions against Private Bills, or against any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order, or Provisional Certificate, and for depositing Duplicates of any Documents relating to any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order, or Provisional Certificate, be extended to Monday 3rd May (*The Chairman of Ways and Means*) *April* 19

Controverted Elections

The Stepney Election, Question, Mr. Cremer; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Charles Russell) *April* 19, 16

Corrupt and Illegal Practices—Decisions of the Judges, Question, Mr. H. G. Reid; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Charles Russell) *May* 4, 265

SITTINGS AND ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

The Easter Recess

Resolved, "That this House will, at the rising of the House this day, adjourn till Monday 3rd May *April* 19

The Derby Day, Notice, Mr. Labouchere *May* 21, 1666

Kitchen and Refreshment Rooms

Moved, "That the Select Committee on the Kitchen and Refreshment Rooms do consist of Nineteen Members" (*The Secretary to the Treasury, Mr. Arnold Morley*) *May* 14, 1144; after short debate, Motion agreed to; other Members added

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE AND PUBLIC BUSINESS

Questions, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr. W. O'Brien, Mr. Addison; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt), The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley), The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *April* 19, 21; Observations, Mr. Sexton, Sir Robert Peel; Questions, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh, Sir Walter B. Barttelot; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler), The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt) *May* 3, 152; Questions, Sir George Campbell, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *May* 4, 270; Observations, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr. Bradlaugh; Replies, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *May* 13, 910; Questions, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *May* 20, 1530;—*Orders of the Day—Postponement of Unprinted Bills*, Observations, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Mr. C. T. D. Acland); short debate thereon *May* 5, 339;—*Government of Ireland Bill*, Question, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *May* 7, 528; Questions, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Lord Randolph Churchill; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *May* 10, 572; Questions, Sir

[*cont.*

PARLIAMENT—COMMONS—*Business of the House and Public Business*—cont.

Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr. T. P. O'Connor; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *May* 11, 765;—*Police Superannuation Bill*, Question, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *May* 10, 568;—*Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) Bill*, Question, Mr. Buchanan; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *May* 10, 570

Notices of Motions and Orders of the Day—The Debate on the Government of Ireland Bill and the Arms Bill

Moved, "That this day, and on succeeding Tuesdays and Fridays, the Order for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Second Reading of the Government of Ireland Bill, when it is set down among the Orders of the Day, have precedence of Notices of Motions and Orders of the Day" (*Mr. Gladstone*) *May* 18, 1289; after short debate, Question put, and agreed to

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER

House of Commons—Accommodation for Members — Lockers, Question, Mr. O'Hanlon; Answer, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) *May* 13, 907

Ventilation of the House, Questions, Mr. Baumann; Answers, Sir Henry Roscoe, Mr. Leveson Gower (A Lord of the Treasury) *April* 19, 8; Question, Sir Henry Roscoe; Answer, The Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works (Sir James M'Garel-Hogg) *May* 17, 1164

Westminster Hall — Admission of the Public, Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *May* 14, 1037

PARLIAMENT—HOUSE OF LORDS

Sat First

May 17—The Lord Forester, after the death of his brother

May 21—The Lord Brougham and Vaux, after the death of his father

PARLIAMENT—HOUSE OF COMMONS

New Members Sworn

May 3—Right Hon. George Shaw Lefevre, *Bradford* (*Central Division*)
Right Hon. Sir Ughtred James Kay-Shuttleworth, baronet, *North-East Lancashire* (*Clitheroe Division*)
Hugo Richard Charteris, commonly called Lord Elcho, *Ipswich*

Parliamentary Elections (Clerical Interference) Bill

c. Motion for Leave (*Captain M'Calmont*) *May* 20, 1628; after short debate, Question put, and negatived

Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers) Act (1875) Amendment Bill
(*Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Chance*)

c. Ordered; read 1° * *May* 11 [Bill 211]
Read 2°, after short debate *May* 14, 1142
Committee *—R.P. *May* 24

Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers' Expenses) (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. Tuite, Mr. Chance, Mr. Timothy Harrington, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. Alexander Blane*)

c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *May* 12, 829
Amendt. to leave out "now," add "upon this day six months" (*Colonel King-Harman*); Question proposed, "That 'now,' &c.;" after debate, Question put; A. 174, N. 56; M. 118 (D. L. 95) [Bill 8]

Parliamentary Franchise Bill [Bill 124]
(*Mr. Moulton, Mr. A. Acland, Mr. Dillwyn*)

c. Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [2nd April], "That the Bill be now read 2°;" Question again proposed; Debate resumed *May* 5, 352; after short debate, Moved, "That the Debate be further adjourned till Wednesday 7th July" (*Mr. Secretary Childers*); Question put, and agreed to

Parliamentary Voters (Registration) Bill
(*Sir Julian Goldsmid, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Robson, Mr. M'Iver*)

c. 2R., Debate adjourned *May* 19, 1465 [Bill 100]

PARNELL, Mr. C. S., *Cork*
Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1536, 1537, 1539, 1540, 1552
Government of Ireland, 2R. 929, 1252, 1728
Parliament—Notices of Motions and Orders of the Day, 1291, 1293
Police Forces Enfranchisement, Comm. Amendt. 143, 148

PAYMASTER GENERAL (*see* THURLOW, Lord)

Peace Preservation (Ireland) Act, 1881—*The Arms (Ireland) Act*
Questions, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) *May* 4, 269

PEASE, Sir J. W., *Durham, Barnard Castle*
Death Penalty, Res. 767, 789
Opium—Cultivation and Manufacture in India, Res. 278, 283, 297, 313, 314
Parliamentary Franchise, 2R. 353
Railway and Canal Traffic, 2R. 425
Railway Regulation, 2R. 1452
Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday, Comm. 350; Motion for reporting Progress, 352
Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday—Alteration of Date, 379

Pease, Mr. A. E., *York*
Dundalk Gas, Consid. 1506
Inland Revenue—Excise—Chicory, 372

Peel, Right Hon. A. W. (*see* Speaker, The)

Peel, Right Hon. Sir R., *Blackburn*
Felixstowe, Ipswich, and Midlands Railway—Petition for Bill, Res. 731
Parliament—Business of the House, 152
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1873, 1874
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, 179
New Harbour at Dover, 155, 159, 165, 167, 172

Peru—The Peruvian Bondholders
Questions, Mr. Thorold Rogers, Mr. T. H. Bolton, Mr. Norris; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *May* 13, 900

Picton, Mr. J. A., *Leicester*
Burial Grounds, 2R. 259
Education Department—School Board Elections—Hours of Polling, 541
Government of Ireland, 2R. 1772

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders Bill (*Mr. Charles Acland, Mr. Mundella*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *May* 3 [Bill 201]
Read 2° * *May* 11

Playfair, Right Hon. Sir Lyon (Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education), *Leeds, S.*
Charity Commissioners—Inkberrow Charities, 1280
Education Department—Questions
Education Code—Examinations, 1156
Punishment of School Children, 1160
Religious Instruction in School Board Schools, 1829
School Boards and Voluntary Schools, 1163
Schools on the Continent—Mr. Matthew Arnold's Report, 1659, 1660
Technical Instruction, 1655, 1656
Technical Instruction in Board Schools, 1834
Technical Instruction, Royal Commission on—Second Report, 1154
Government of Ireland, 2R. 1365
Literature, Science, and Art—Water Colour Drawings at the South Kensington Museum, 561
Lowe's Charity (Lichfield), Res. 1391
Medical Acts Amendment, 2R. 236; Comm. Motion for Adjournment, 1256; *cl.* 1, Motion for reporting Progress, *ib*

Plunket, Right Hon. D. R., *Dublin University*
Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1569, 1570
Railway and Canal Traffic, 2R. 411
Railway Regulation, 2R. 1462

Police and Improvement (Scotland) Provisional Order (Leith) Bill
(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Mundella*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 19 [Bill 197]
Read 2°, after short debate *May* 20, 1516

Police Forces Enfranchisement Bill
(*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Lord Claud Hamilton, Mr. Radcliffe Cooke, Mr. Cowen, Sir George Russell*)
c. Order for Committee read *April* 19, 143; Moved, "That this House will, upon Monday, the 3rd day of May next, resolve itself into the said Committee" (*Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson*)
Amendt. to leave out "Monday, the 3rd day of May next," insert "Friday, the 20th day of August next" (*Mr. Parnell*) *v.*; Question proposed, "That Monday, &c.;" after short debate, Question put, and negatived; Question put, "That 'Friday, &c.;" A. 80, N. 77; M. 3 (D. L. 86)
Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to
Order for Committee upon Friday 20th August read, and discharged; Bill withdrawn * *May* 21 [Bill 3]

Police Forces (Removal of Disabilities) Bill (*Mr. Tottenham, Sir William Hart Dyke, Sir Julian Goldsmid, Viscount Grimston, Mr. Biddulph, Colonel King-Harman, Mr. Rylands*)
c. Motion for Leave (*Mr. Tottenham*) *May* 20, 1631; after short debate, Motion agreed to; Bill ordered; read 1° * [Bill 221]

Police Superannuation Bill
Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *May* 24, 1827

Political Demonstrations—Military Bands
Questions, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Coote, Sir Herbert Maxwell; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) *May* 21, 1660

Poor Law (England and Wales)
Death of a Child in Totnes Workhouse, Question, Viscount Barrington; Answer, Lord Sudeley (for the Local Government Board) *May* 6, 359
Law of Removal—Case of Mary Ann Assiter, Maidstone, Question, Mr. Isaacs; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Stansfeld) *May* 4, 267

Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. Edward Harrington, Mr. Edmond Dwyer Gray, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Timothy Healy, Mr. Jordan*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *May* 19, 1413

[*cont.*

Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) Bill—cont.
Amendt. to leave out "now," add "upon this day six months" (*Colonel King-Harman*); Question proposed, "That 'now,' &c.;" after debate, Question put; A. 203, N. 105; M. 98 (D. L. 99)
Main Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2° [Bill 5]

Poor Relief (Ireland) Bill (*Earl Spencer*)
l. Royal Assent *May* 10 [49 *Vict.* c. 17]

PORTMAN, Hon. E. B., *Dorsetshire, N.*
Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries—Transfer to the Board of Trade, 1660

POST OFFICE
Kiveton Park, York, W.R., Question, Mr. Shirley; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *May* 11, 754
Outward American Mails, Question, Mr. Montagu; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *May* 3, 151
Post Offices at Railway Stations, Observations, Mr. Cavendish Bentinck; Reply, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *May* 7, 545 [House counted out]

Parcel Post
Conventions with France and Italy, Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *May* 6, 369

Telegraph Department
Insufficiently Addressed Telegrams, Question, Mr. Forwood; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *May* 10, 567
Secrecy of Telegrams, Question, Dr. Cameron; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *May* 24, 1821

Post Office — Postal Service (British Possessions)—Rates of Postage
Amendt. on Committee of Supply *May* 7, To leave out from "That," add "the interests of the people urgently require that on letters, newspapers, and printed matter there should be a discontinuance of the charges of higher rates of postage in Great Britain than those which are charged to the public in other countries for Postal Service by British steamers carrying Mails to and from the Colonies and the possessions of Great Britain in India and elsewhere" (*Mr. James Hutton*) *v.*, 530; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after short debate, Question put, and agreed to

Post Office Sites Bill (*Mr. Spencer, Mr. Henry H. Fowler*)
c. Select Committee nominated *May* 19; List of the Committee, 1466 [Bill 148]

POWELL, Mr. F. S., *Wigan*
Compulsory Purchase of Land Compensation, 2R. 858
Customs and Inland Revenue, 2R. 235
Education Department—School Board Elections—Hours of Polling, 541
Lowe's Charity (Lichfield), Res. 1394
Public Health Acts (Improvement Expenses) Comm. 1412
Representation of the People Act (1884) Extension, 2R. 342
Supply—Reformatory and Industrial Schools in Great Britain, 211

POWER, Mr. P. J., *Waterford, E.*
Ireland—Salmon Fisheries—The Suir Fisheries, 1278
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1895, 1904

POWIS, Earl of
Hyde Park Corner (New Streets), 2R. 1263
Incumbents of Benefices Loans Extension, 2R. 1150

PRICE, Captain G. E., *Devonport*
Greenwich Hospital—The Wives and Families of Naval Pensioners, 528
Navy—Commissions for Seamen of the Fleet, 1517
H.M.S. "Collingwood"—Bursting of the 43-ton Gun, 527, 1650
Navy Estimates—Scientific Branch, 1971, 1973

PRIME MINISTER (*see* GLADSTONE, Right Hon. W. E.)

Probation of First Offenders Bill (*Mr. Howard Vincent, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Sir Algernon Borthwick, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Molloy*) [Bill 39]
c. 2R., after short debate, Debate adjourned *May* 5, 333

Public Health
Removal of Small-Pox Prisoners, Questions, Mr. Stanley Leighton; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *May* 11, 759
Small-Pox at Wooburn, Bucks, Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Secretary to the Local Government Board (Mr. Borlase) *May* 18, 1285

Public Health Acts (Improvement Expenses) Bill (*Mr. Dodds, Sir Edward Reed, Mr. Arnold Morley, Mr. William Cook, Mr. Bullard*)
c. Order for Committee (*on re-comm*) read *May* 18, 1411
Moved, "That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power to amend section 156 of 'The Public Health Act, 1875,' by extending its provisions to the erection of buildings in streets" (*Captain Cotton*); Motion agreed to

[*cont.*

Public Health Acts (*Improvement Expenses*) *Bill* —cont.
Moved, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair" (*Mr. William Cook*); Motion agreed to; Committee—R.P. [Bill 153]

Public Offices — The New War Office and Admiralty
Question, Viscount Sidmouth; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (The Earl of Elgin) *May* 21, 1638

Public Parks and Works (Metropolis) Bill (*Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Leveson Gower*)
c. Ordered * *May* 20
Read 1° * *May* 21 [Bill 227]

Quarry Fencing Bill (*Mr. Thomas Blake, Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Burt, Mr. Cobb, Mr. Abraham* (*Glamorgan, Rhondda*)
c. Bill withdrawn, after short debate *May* 5, 347 [Bill 185]

QUILTER, Mr. W. C., *Suffolk, S.*
Beer Adulteration (No. 3), 2R. 868
Felixstowe, Ipswich, and Midlands Railway—Petition for Bill, Res. 725

RAIKES, Right Hon. H. C., *Cambridge University*
Government of Ireland—The Schedules, 1288
Parliament—Notices of Motions and Orders of the Day, 1297

Railway and Canal Traffic Bill
Control of Canals, Question, Mr. Herbert Gardner; Answer, The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) *May* 7, 529

Railway and Canal Traffic Bill (*Mr. Mundella, Mr. Acland, Mr. Attorney General*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *May* 6, 380
Amendt. to leave out from "That," add "while this House desires legislation with the object of securing uniformity of classification for merchandise conveyed by Railway, the consolidation of the toll powers of Railway Companies, and such other modifications of the existing law as experience has shown to be useful and necessary, including the establishment of a strong and permanent Court with special powers over Railways and Canals, it is not prepared to sanction any compulsory interference with or diminution of those powers of earning revenue granted by Parliament to Railway Companies upon the faith of which eight hundred millions of capital have been expended, and upon which the security of that capital depends" (*Mr. Joseph Bolton*) *v.*; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after long debate, Amendt. withdrawn
Main Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2° [Bill 138]

Railway and Canal Traffic [*Expenses, &c.*]
c. Res. considered in Committee, and agreed to *May* 11, 828
Res reported *May* 12

Railway Regulation Bill (*Mr. Channing, Mr. Joseph Leicester, Mr. John Wilson* (*Durham*), *Mr. C. S. Parker, Mr. Jacoby, Mr. Lawson*)
c. Read 2°, and committed to a Select Committee, after debate *May* 19, 1440 [Bill 97]

RAMSAY, Mr. J., *Falkirk, &c.*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 15, 28; *cl.* 16, Amendt. 56, 58, 61

RAMSDEN, Sir J. W., *York, W.R., Osgoldcross*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 29, 110

RATHBONE, Mr. W., *Carnarvonshire, Arfon*
Government of Ireland, 2R. 1729

RAVENSWORTH, Earl of
Navy—Explosion on Board H.M.S. "Collingwood," 494
Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham), Comm. 1642

REDMOND, Mr. J. E., *Wexford, N.*
Commons Regulation (Hayling) Provisional Order, 2R. 740
Government of Ireland, 2R. 960, 969

REDMOND, Mr. W. H. K., *Fermanagh, N.*
Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1582, 1583
Dundalk Gas, Consid. 1506
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1920

Registration of Voters
Expenses of the Franchise, Questions, Mr. Leahy, Mr. P. J. O'Brien, Mr. P. M'Donald; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) *May* 24, 1835
The Vestry Clerk of St. Pancras, Questions, Mr. Baggallay; Answers, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Stansfeld) *April* 19, 7

REID, Mr. H. G., *Aston Manor*
Controverted Elections—Corrupt and Illegal Practices—Decisions of the Judges, 265, 267

Removal Terms (Burghs) (Scotland) Act (1881) Amendment Bill (*Mr. Edmund Robertson, Mr. J. W. Barclay, Mr. Eugene Wason*)
c. Bill withdrawn * *May* 3 [Bill 105]

Representation of the People Act (1884) Extension Bill (*Sir Robert Fowler, Mr. Lionel Cohen, Mr. Hunt, Sir Roper Lethbridge*) [Bill 25]
c. 2R., after short debate, Debate adjourned *May* 5, 341

Representation of the People Act, 1884—*Requisition Forms—The Rate Collectors of Mountmellick Union*
Questions, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley) *May* 20, 1520

Returning Officers' Charges (Scotland) Bill (*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland*)
c. Read 2°, after debate *May* 3, 263 [Bill 188]
Committee *—R.P. *May* 12

Reynolds, Mr. W. J., *Tyrone, E.*
Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1601, 1602

Richard, Mr. H., *Merthyr Tydvil*
Government of Ireland Bill Debate, 1836

Richmond and Gordon, Duke of
Navy Estimates, 1886-7, Res. 559
Salmon Fisheries Amendment, 2R. 700

Ripon, Marquess of (First Lord of the Admiralty)
Navy — Discipline, &c. — Irregularities in Barracks, 557
Explosion on Board H.M.S. "Collingwood," 495
Navy—Royal Naval Volunteer Corps, Res. 491
Navy Estimates, 1886-7, Res. 558, 560

Rivers Pollution Prevention Bill [H.L.] (*The Lord Balfour*)
l. Presented; read 1ª * *May* 17 (No. 114)

Robertson, Mr. E., *Dundee*
Scotland—Law and Justice—Circuit Courts, 9
Tenure of Land—Homestead and Exemption Laws in the United States, 524

Robertson, Mr. H., *Merioneth*
Railway Regulation, 2R. 1455

Robertson, Mr. J. P. B., *Bute*
Conveyancing (Scotland) Act (1874) Amendment, 2R. 1408
Crofters (Scotland (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 16, 41; *cl.* 29, 91, 92, 93, 113; Amendt. 114, 116, 117; Consid. *cl.* 33, 477

Robinson, Mr. T., *Gloucester*
Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers' Expenses) (Ireland), 2R. 837
Vaccination Laws—Repeated Prosecutions—Case of Charles Hayward, Ashford, Kent, 268, 269

Rogers, Mr. J. E. Thorold, *Southwark, Bermondsey*
Government of Ireland, 2R. 1192
International and Colonial Copyright, Comm. *cl.* 5, 486
Peru—Peruvian Bondholders, 900
Railway and Canal Traffic, 2R. 446, 450

Roscoe, Sir H. E., *Manchester, S.*
Medical Acts Amendment, 2R. 245
Palace of Westminster — Ventilation of the House, 8, 9, 1164
Spain—Signatures of the Commercial Convention, 572

Rosebery, Earl of (Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs)
South-Eastern Europe—Greece—Blockade of the Greek Coast, 546
Spain—Signatures of the Commercial Convention, 550

Round, Mr. J., *Essex, N.E., Harwich*
Customs and Inland Revenue, 2R. 235

Russell, Sir C. (Attorney General), *Hackney, S.*
Continuance Sittings, 14
Controverted Elections—Corrupt and Illegal Practices—Decisions of the Judges, 266
Losses by Riot (Compensation), 2R. 1613
Married Women (Maintenance in Case of Desertion), 2R. 344
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Railway and Canal Traffic, 2R. 414

Russell, Mr. E. R., *Glasgow, Bridgeton*
Education Department—School Board Elections—Hours of Polling, 543

Rylands, Mr. P., *Burnley*
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1845; Amendt. 1846, 1851, 1870
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, 174
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Supreme Court of Judicature, 181, 188
Supreme Court of Judicature—The Central Office, 373
Tobacco, Motion for a Select Committee, 274

St. Albans, Duke of
Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister, 2R. 1793

St. Aubyn, Sir J., *Cornwall, W., St. Ives*
Mining Leases (Cornwall and Devon), 2R. 1625, 1627, 1628
Stannaries Act (1869) Amendment, 2R. 1616, 1619, 1622, 1625

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill (*Sir Joseph Pease, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Isaac Wilson*)
c. Order for Committee read; Moved, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair" *May* 5, 348
  Moved, "That it be an Instruction to the said Committee that they have power to extend the provisions of the said Bill to all houses, shops, and buildings, or any part thereof, occupied or used by any club, society, or association in which intoxicating liquors are sold or supplied to the members of the said club, society, or association for consumption in the said house, or shop, or building, or any part thereof" (*Mr. Addison*); after short debate, Question put, and negatived
  Main Question put, and agreed to; Committee—R.P. [Bill 27]
  Alteration of Date, Observations, Question, Sir Joseph Pease; Answer, Mr. Speaker *May* 6, 379

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham) Bill
(*The Lord Bishop of Durham*)
l. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª" *May* 11, 703
  Amendt. to leave out ("now") add ("this day six months") (*The Lord Bramwell*); after debate, on Question, That ("now,") &c.; Cont. 47, Not-Cont. 41; M. 6; resolved in the affirmative; Div. List, Cont. and Not-Cont. 720; Bill read 2ª (No. 59)
  Committee *May* 21, 1638
  Report * *May* 24 (No. 123)

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham) Bill (Petitions)
  Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the validity of all petitions presented to this House for or against the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham) Bill, and of the signatures attached thereto, with a view to ascertaining how far such signatures are or are not genuine" (*The Earl of Wemyss*) *May* 18, 1273; after short debate, Motion agreed to; Committee appointed accordingly

SALISBURY, Marquess of
  Church Patronage, 2R. 892
  Labourers (Ireland) Acts Amendment, Comm. *cl.* 11, 1267, 1268; *add. cl.* 1271
  Navy—The Estimates, 1886-7, Res. 558, 560
  Parliament—Business of the House, 877, 879
    Earl of Redesdale, the late—Chairman of Committees of this House — Obituary Notice, 356
  Parliament—Chairman of Committees of this House, Res. Amendt. 553
  Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Durham), 717
  South-Eastern Europe—Greece—Blockade of the Greek Coast, 549

Salmon Fisheries Amendment (Scotland) Bill (*The Marquess of Huntly*)
l. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª" *May* 11, 692
  Amendt. to leave out ("now") add ("this day six months") (*The Lord Balfour*); after short debate, Amendt. original Motion, and Bill withdrawn (No. 30)

SAMUELSON, Sir B., *Oxfordshire, Banbury*
  Education Department — Technical Instruction, 1655
  Railway and Canal Traffic, 2R. 435
  Technical Instruction in Board Schools, 1833

SAUNDERS, Mr. W., *Hull, E.*
  Education Department—School Board Elections—Hours of Polling, 540

SAUNDERSON, Major E., *Armagh, N.*
  Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1539, 1540, 1541, 1556, 1557
  Dundalk Gas, Consid. 1515
  Government of Ireland, 2R. 1005, 1752, 1759, 1762, 1763, 1765, 1770, 1771
  Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers' Expenses) (Ireland), 2R. 837

SCLATER-BOOTH, Right Hon. G., *Hants, Basingstoke*
  Army—Co-operative Stores, 756

SCOTLAND — Secretary for, &c. (*see* DALHOUSIE, Earl of)

SCOTLAND (*Questions*)
  Agricultural Holdings Act—Fishermen on the North-East Coast of Scotland, Question, Mr. Esslemont; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *May* 20, 1522
  Distress in Kintra, Ross of Mull, Argyllshire, Question, Mr. Macfarlane; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *May* 10, 568
  Education—Memorandum of Agreement between the School Board of Ross Keen, Ross-shire, and its Teachers, Questions, Dr. R. Macdonald; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *May* 10, 561
  Island of Skye—School and Poor Rates, Question, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *May* 24, 1823
  Local Taxation—The Blue Book for 1884, Question, Mr. J. W. Barclay; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *May* 10, 566
  Sea Fisheries Act (Scotland)—Foreshores, Question, Mr. Macfarlane; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *May* 20, 1518
  Universities, Question, Observations, Lord Balfour; Reply, The Secretary for Scotland (The Earl of Dalhousie) *May* 17, 1145

Evictions (Scotland)
  Eviction in Perthshire, Question, Mr. Macdonald Cameron; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *May* 14, 1034

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Scotland—*Evictions*—cont.
At Ardnamurchan, Question, Mr. Macfarlane; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *May* 24, 1833

Law and Justice (*Scotland*)
Case of "Principal" Nero, Question, Dr. Cameron; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *May* 13, 903
Circuit Courts, Question, Mr. E. Robertson; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *April* 19, 9

Magistracy (*Scotland*)
Sheriff Ivory's Report to the Commissioners of Supply, Question, Dr. Cameron; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *May* 14, 1032; Question, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *May* 17, 1155
The Gaelic Language, Question, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour) *April* 19, 6

Post Office (*Scotland*)
Deliveries of Mails to Portree, Question, Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *May* 3, 150
Mails to the Outer Hebrides, Question, Mr. Macfarlane; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *May* 7, 524
The Inverness Post Office, Question, Mr. Finlay; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *May* 6, 363

Secret Service Money
Questions, Mr. Albert Grey, Mr. Brodrick, Mr. Boord, Sir Julian Goldsmid; Answers, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) *May* 24, 1829

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Sellar, Mr. A. C., *Lanarkshire, Partick*
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Selwin-Ibbetson, Right Hon. Sir H. J., *Essex, Epping*
Fires (Metropolis)—Fatal Fire in Beak Street, 1517
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Seton-Karr, Mr. H., *St. Helen's*
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Sexton, Mr. T., *Sligo, S.*
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Sheehy, Mr. D., *Galway, S.*
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Shirley, Mr. W. S., *Yorkshire, W.R., Doncaster*
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(*Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Burt, Mr. Macnaghten, Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Rathbone*)
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Navy—Royal Naval Volunteer Corps, Res. 490, 492
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Simon, Mr. Serjeant J., *Dewsbury*
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Small, Mr. J. F., *Down, S.*
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Smith, Mr. S., *Flintshire*
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Smithwick, Mr. J. F., *Kilkenny*
Ireland—Railways—Railway Rates, 13

South Pacific, Islands of the
Australasian Colonies—The Convention of Sydney—Foreign Annexation in the South Pacific, Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) *May* 13, 909
The New Hebrides, Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Osborne Morgan) *May* 14, 1042
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Spain
Commercial Convention, Signatures of the, Ministerial Statement, The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (The Earl of Rosebery) *May* 10, 550; Statement, The Under

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British Colonial Produce, Question, Mr. Baden-Powell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *May* 14, 1041
British Colonial Wines, Questions, Sir James Fergusson, Mr. Forwood; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt), The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *May* 13, 906

Speaker, The (Right Hon. Arthur Wellesley Peel), *Warwick and Leamington*
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Spencer, Earl (Lord President of the Council)
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Spensley, Mr. H., *Finsbury, Central*
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Spicer, Mr. H., *Islington, S.*
International and Colonial Copyright, Comm. *cl.* 6, 487
Married Women (Maintenance in Case of Desertion), 2R. 346

Sporting Lands Rating (Scotland) Bill
(*The Earl of Elgin*)
l. Royal Assent *May* 10 [49 *Vict.* c. 15]

Stack, Mr. J., *Kerry, N.*
Ireland—Poor Law—Glin Union, Co. Leitrim —Qualification for Guardians, 5

Stafford, Marquess of, *Sutherland*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 16, 74

Stanhope, Earl of
Drowned Persons (Discovery and Interment), 2R. 358

Stanhope, Right Hon. E., *Lincolnshire, Horncastle*
Import Duties, Res. 1101, 1102
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Stanley, Right Hon. Colonel Sir F. A., *Lancashire, N., Blackpool*
North America—Canadian Fisheries, 1831

Stanley of Alderley, Lord
Customs and Inland Revenue, 3R. 1348

Stannaries Act (1869) Amendment Bill
(*Sir John St. Aubyn, Mr. Courtney, Viscount Ebrington, Mr. Bickford Smith, Mr. Seale-Hayne*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *May* 5 [Bill 203]
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *May* 20, 1616
Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Conybeare*); after short debate, Motion withdrawn
Original Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2°

Stansfeld, Right Hon. J. (President of the Local Government Board), *Halifax*
Allotments Extension Act, 1882, 19
Government of Ireland, 2R. 1176
Metropolitan Rating—Parish of Putney, 1529
Poor Law (England and Wales)—Law of Removal—Case of Mary Ann Assiter, Maidstone, 268
Registration of Voters—The Vestry Clerk of St. Pancras, 7, 8
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STEWART, Mr. M. J., *Kirkcudbright*
Crofters (Scotland) (No. 2), 3R. 382
Ireland — Piers and Harbours — Portpatrick Harbour, 369
Terms of Removal (Scotland), Comm. 690

Stipendiary Magistrates (Pensions) Bill (*Mr. Hastings, Mr. Kenrick, Mr. Forwood, Mr. Wiggin*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *May* 12 [Bill 212]
Bill withdrawn * *May* 18
Leave given to present another Bill instead thereof

Stipendiary Magistrates (Pensions) (No. 2) Bill (*Mr. Hastings, Mr. Kenrick, Mr. Forwood, Mr. Wiggin*)
c. Read 1° * *May* 18 [Bill 215]

STUART, Mr. J., *Shoreditch, Hoxton*
Lowe's Charity (Lichfield), Res. Motion for Adjournment, 1402

SUDELEY, Lord
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Poor Law (England and Wales)—Death of a Child in Totnes Workhouse, 359

SULLIVAN, Right Hon. T. D. (Lord Mayor of Dublin), *Dublin, College Green*
Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1586
Government of Ireland, 2R. 1346
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SULLIVAN, Mr. D., *Westmeath, S.*
Army Stores—Military Tents, 6

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The Estimates—Vote on Account, Question, Sir Walter B. Barttelot; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) *May* 21, 1667

SUPPLY
Considered in Committee *May* 3, 153—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES — CLASS I. — PUBLIC WORKS AND BUILDINGS—Votes 15a to 20, 23 & 24; CLASS III.—LAW AND JUSTICE—Votes 1 to 19; 22, 23, 31, & 32
Resolutions reported *May* 5, 351
Resolution (25.) £58,921, to complete the sum for the Salaries and Expenses of the Courts of Law and Justice in Scotland, and other Legal Charges postponed
Postponed Resolution considered *May* 6, 489
Moved, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution;" Moved, "That the Debate be adjourned till Monday next" (*Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh*); Motion agreed to; Debate adjourned
Debate resumed *May* 10, 691; after short debate, Question put, and agreed to
Considered in Committee *May* 21, 1812 — CIVIL SERVICES—CLASS II., Votes 28, 31, & 41; CLASS VI., Vote 1; REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, Vote 5; ARMY, Vote 10; NAVY, Votes 4, 5, & 15
Resolutions reported *May* 25

SWINBURNE, Sir J., *Staffordshire, Lichfield*
Lowe's Charity (Lichfield), Res. 1385, 1398
Opium—Cultivation and Manufacture in India, Res. 292
Parliament—Notices of Motions and Orders of the Day, 1297
Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers' Expenses) (Ireland), 2R. 842, 843

TALBOT, Mr. J. G., *Oxford University*
Charterhouse, 2R. 507, 521

TANNER, Dr. C., *Cork Co., Mid*
Arms (Ireland), 2R. 1593, 1599
Merchant Shipping—Wreck of the Barque "Cartwell," 1657

TEMPLE, Sir R., *Worcester, Evesham*
Opium—Cultivation and Manufacture in India, Res. 294
Postal Service (British Possessions)—Rates of Postage, Res. 534
Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday, Comm. 350

Terms of Removal (Scotland) Bill (*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland*)
c. Read 2° * *May* 5 [Bill 187]
Order for Committee read; Moved, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair" *May* 10, 690; after short debate, Question put; A. 113, N. 28; M. 85 (D. L. 92); Committee—R.P.

THURLOW, Lord (Paymaster General)
Metropolitan Police Stations, 2R. 558

Tobacco
Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the working and effect of the present system of levying Duty upon Tobacco; to consider, having due regard to Revenue requirements, whether any change should be introduced, and to inquire and report upon the excessive use of moisture contained in manufactured Tobacco" (*Mr. Macfarlane*) *May* 4, 271; after short debate, Question put, and negatived

TOMLINSON, Mr. W. E. M., *Preston*
Burial Grounds, 2R. 258
Coal Mines Regulation, Motion for Leave, 1406
Compulsory Purchase of Land Compensation, 2R. 862
Customs and Inland Revenue, 2R. 234
Losses by Riot (Compensation), Motion for Leave, 806; 2R. 1614
Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers) Act (1875) Amendment, 2R. 1114

Tomlinson, Mr. W. E. M.—*cont.*
Police Forces Enfranchisement, Comm. 146
Stannaries Act (1869) Amendment, 2R. 1620, 1625
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Valuation of Real Property, Res. 799

Tottenham, Mr. A. L., *Winchester*
Army (Auxiliary Forces)—Militia Regulations, 907

Trade and Commerce
Imitation British Trade Marks, Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *May* 20, 1519
[See titles *Spain—Merchandize Marks Act*, 1862]

Tramways Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill (*Mr. Charles Acland, Mr. Mundella*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *April* 19 [Bill 195]
Read 2°* *May* 10

Tramways Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill (*Mr. Charles Acland, Mr. Mundella*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *May* 10 [Bill 208]

Tramways Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill (*Mr. Charles Acland, Mr. Mundella*)
c. Ordered; read 1°* *May* 17 [Bill 213]

Treasury—First Lord (*see* Gladstone, Right Hon. W. E.)

Treasury—Lord of (*see* Gower, Mr. G. G. L.)

Treasury — Financial Secretary to (*see* Fowler, Mr. Henry H.)

Treasury — Secretary to (*see* Morley, Mr. Arnold)

Trees (Ireland) Bill
c. Lords Amendts. considered *May* 17, 1256; one agreed to; some agreed to with Amendts.; some disagreed to
Committee appointed, "to draw up Reasons to be assigned to the Lords for disagreeing to the Amendts. to which this House hath disagreed; List of the Committee, 1260
l. Returned from the Commons with one of the Amendts. agreed to, some agreed to with Amendts., and some disagreed to, together with Reasons for such disagreement: The Commons Amendts. and reasons to be printed *May* 18 (No. 117)

Trevelyan, Rt. Hon. G. O., *Hawick, &c.*
Ireland—Magistracy — Resident Magistrates, 14

Tuite, Mr. J., *Westmeath, N.*
Ireland—Board of Works—Payment of Final Instalment of a Loan, 1157

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Tuite, Mr. J.—*cont.*
Parliamentary Elections (Returning Officers' Expenses) (Ireland), 2R. 829
Supply—Civil Services and Revenue Departments, 1903

Tyler, Sir H. W., *Great Yarmouth*
Felixstowe, Ipswich, and Midlands Railway—Petition for Bill, Res. 730
Navy—H.M.S. "Collingwood"—Bursting of the 43-ton Gun, 905, 1160

Ulster Canal and Tyrone Navigation Bill (*Mr. John Morley, Mr. Henry H. Fowler*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *May* 3, 250; Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Biggar*); after short debate, Question put; A. 6, N. 127; M. 121 (D. L. 87); original Question put; Bill read 2° [Bill 141]
Referred to Select Comm.* *May* 6
Moved, "That the Select Committee do consist of Nine Members, Five to be nominated by the House and Four by the Committee of Selection" *May* 13, 1030; Amendt. to leave out "five" (*Mr. Biggar*); Question proposed, "That 'five,' &c.;" after short debate, Amendt. withdrawn; main Question put, and agreed to
Moved, "That Mr. Henry H. Fowler be a Member of the Committee" (*The Secretary to the Treasury, Mr. Arnold Morley*) *May* 18, 1406; after short debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Arnold Morley*); Motion agreed to; Debate adjourned
Debate resumed *May* 24, 1974; Question put, and agreed to; other Members nominated

Vaccination Laws—Repeated Prosecutions—Case of Charles Hayward, Ashford, Kent
Questions, Mr. Robinson; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Childers) *May* 4, 268

Vaccination—The Island of Rügen
Question, Mr. Arthur O'Connor; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce) *May* 14, 1040

Valuation of Real Property
Moved, "That a comprehensive measure for regulating the valuation of property for the purposes of Imperial and Local Taxation is essentially necessary" (*Mr. Duckham*) *May* 11, 790; after short debate, Resolution agreed to

Vanderbyl, Mr. P., *Portsmouth*
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Venezuela—The Territory of the Yuruary
Question, Mr. Watt; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bryce *May* 17, 1160

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WAR DEPARTMENT—Financial Secretary to (*see* GLADSTONE, Mr. H. J.)

WARING, Colonel T., *Down, N.*
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